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JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH,

AS

HELD AND TAUGHT BY LUTHERANS,

TOGETHER WITH THE

ASSOCIATED DOCTRINES OF SANCTIFICATION, AND
THE UNION OF THE SOUL WITH CHRIST;

OR THE

LUTHERAN DOCTRINE OF THE INNER LIFE.

A BOOK FOR THE PEOPLE.

BY SIMEON W. HARKEY, D. D.,

AUTHOR OF
"CHURCH'S BEST STATE," "VALUE OF AN EVANGELICAL
MINISTRY," "DAILY PRAYER BOOK," ETC.

PHILADELPHIA:
LUTHERAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
42 NORTH NINTH STREET.
1875.

H2825
1875

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PREFACE.

During a ministry of more than *forty-one* years, the author of the following work has long been under the impression that the great doctrine of *Justification by Faith*, as taught in our Lutheran Confessions, and by our best Lutheran authors, was not as well understood as it ought to be, by our own people even, especially by those using the English language; and much less by the Christian public generally. He has here endeavored to supply this "lack of service;" with what success the future must show. It has been his constant and prayerful aim to be so clear and thorough, upon each point, that the sincere and honest inquirer, even of moderate capacity and attainments, might, by the grace of God, unerringly be led into the truth, and to Christ alone for salvation. The book is intended for the *people* rather than for theologians, except as these too, like other sinners, can be saved only by faith in the blessed Redeemer. The author has freely availed himself of all the helps within his reach, but, next to God's infallible Word, has relied mainly

upon the symbols of his own Church, and the authorities of Reformation times. May all who read these pages be surely and safely guided into the only way of salvation provided for fallen man, and thus God be glorified, and many souls saved.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

INTRODUCTION.

How shall a man be just before God? is a question of most intense and thrilling interest. The serious inquirer, awakened to a sense of his personal guilt and danger, is distressed to know how he is to be justified in the sight of his Maker. He reflects upon the divine holiness and justice, and the purity and spirituality of the moral law, and then upon the innumerable and aggravated sins of which he knows himself to be guilty, and he trembles for his soul. Does he look back upon his past history? He sees nothing but a long black catalogue of transgressions, for, alas! his whole life has been stained by sin. Does he look forward? The judgment-seat of Christ, where he must soon stand, bursts upon his affrighted vision, and involuntarily he exclaims: "Lord, how shall I appear?" Upon the left is Sinai in a blaze, whose vivid lightnings and rolling thunder strike terror into his alarmed conscience. Above him, gloomy clouds, big with wrath, are gathering

and every moment threaten to break in judgment on his head. He looks down, and sees himself standing on "slippery rocks," while fiery billows, in awful grandeur, roll beneath him. Trembling with fear, he exclaims: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "What shall I do to be saved?" "Lord, save, I perish." At this moment, far upon the right, a single ray of light from the cross of Christ breaks in on the terrible darkness of his soul, and a sweet voice from Calvary sounds in his ears: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."[1] "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."[2] "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[3]

"Yes! Jesus, Jesus! there I'll cling,
I'll crowd beneath his sheltering wing;
I'll clasp the cross, and holding there,
E'en me, O bliss! his wrath will spare."

How important then is this great doctrine of Justification by Faith to every individual personally, and to the Church of Christ at large! No wonder that Luther called it, "The article of a standing or falling church," and said of it: "If this single article remain pure, the whole Christian community will also remain pure and harmonious, and without factions. But if it remain not pure, it is impossible to restrain a single error, or the spirit of faction."[4] And in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, page 130, he

[1] John i. 29. [2] Is. xlv. 22. [3] Matt. xi. 28. [4] Form of Concord, p. 543.

says, "If this doctrine be lost, then is also the doctrine of truth, life, and salvation lost and gone. If this doctrine flourish, then all good things flourish; religion, the true service of God, the glory of God, the right knowledge of all things which are necessary for a Christian man to know." In the Augsburg Confession it is called, "The principal article of the Christian Creed;" and in the Apology of Melancthon we have this declaration: "Now, since this contention" (the controversy with Rome) "concerns the highest and most important article" (Justification) "of all the Christian doctrines, and as much indeed depends upon this article, which especially contributes to a clear, correct apprehension of all the holy Scriptures, and shows the only way to the unspeakable treasure and the true knowledge of Christ; and opens the only door into the whole Bible, without which article the poor conscience can have no hope true and invariably fixed, or conceive the riches of the grace of Christ; we, therefore pray your imperial Majesty to hear as graciously concerning those great, sublime, and all-important subjects, according to the necessary nature of the case."[1]

It is clear that Justification by Faith is, above all others, the one great doctrine of Protestantism, as against all notions of justification by works, by the merits and intercessions of saints, by penance, by sacraments and church ordinances, taught by Ro-

[1] Form of Concord, p. 67.

manists. If this doctrine be not true, Protestantism is a lie, and has no right to live; and if it be misunderstood, neglected, or set aside, its glory has departed. The Reformers felt that they were not contending about trifles, but about matters most vital to Christianity and the salvation of men's souls, and hence were willing to give up everything, even life itself, in defense of their cause. And the subject is no less important now. By it we stand or fall. If anything can justify us in the sight of God, other than true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then Protestantism is a failure, and Rome has triumphed. With such views and feelings we desire to approach this great subject, and hope, with the help of God, by going back to the original sources, the Divine Word and the writings of Reformation times mainly, to be able to bring it out, especially in its *practical* bearings, in all its fulness and beauty. If our beloved Evangelical Lutheran Church has any true glory, it is before all things, and above all else, the fact that she has given back to the world, after the night of "Dark Ages," extending over more than a thousand years, this great doctrine in all its original purity and power. This is her CROWN, and I would say to her most emphatically: "Hold that fast which thou hast, THAT NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN."[1]

[1] Rev. iii. 11.

CHAPTER I.

USE OF THE WORD—JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS AND JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

THE words "to justify" are used on a variety of different occasions in the Scriptures, and with various shades of meaning.

We read of men who justify *themselves.* Thus it is said of a certain lawyer, who tempted our Savior, that "he was willing to justify himself."[1] And Christ tells the Pharisees: "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts."[2] In these instances the word seems to mean simply, *to think and speak of one's own person and actions as just and righteous.*

Men are also sometimes said to justify *each other.* "Wo unto them which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him."[3] And again: "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord."[4] Here to justify is the opposite of to condemn. To justify the wicked is to *acquit them of their crimes*—to permit them to go un-

[1] Luke x. 29. [2] Luke xvi. 15. [3] Is. v. 23. [4] Prov. xvii. 15.

punished—to approve of or connive at their evil ways. It is to treat the wicked as if they acted righteously and justly, and the righteous as if they acted unjustly and wickedly. Those who do this, favor sin and condemn holiness, and this is an abomination to the Lord

Again, men are sometimes said to justify God. When the Savior set forth the true character of John the Baptist, and spoke in praise of him in the hearing of his disciples, we read: "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John."[1] These people knew and believed that John was a good man and a prophet—a teacher sent from God, and they were pleased to hear Christ's favorable testimony of him, and they praised and magnified the goodness and mercy of God, who had sent both John and Christ. It seemed to them worthy of God, who always acts justly and righteously.

These examples may aid in settling the meaning of the word. The verb, to justify, is a *law term*, and when used with reference to the dealings of God with his creatures, seems always to signify one of two things: either, first, *to declare them innocent*, that is, that their actions have conformed to the requirements of his just and holy law; or secondly, *to pardon the guilty for Christ's sake*, remitting the penalty of the violated law, and treating them afterwards as if they had never broken it.

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[1] Luke vii. 29.

1. *Men are justified when they are declared innocent, and treated as such.* God commanded the Judges of Israel to "justify the righteous and condemn the wicked."[1] Persons accused of crime among the Jews were to be brought before the Judges, by whom the case must be examined, when, after a fair and impartial investigation, their guilt or innocence would appear. If they were found guilty, they were to be condemned to suffer the punishment which, by law, was attached to such cases; but if they were found innocent, they were to be *justified*, that is, acquitted and declared not guilty. They had not transgressed the law in the given case, but had been falsely accused, and consequently there was nothing against them—they were clear in the sight of the law, and were to be publicly pronounced innocent, that is, justified. And as this was done at the express command of God, it was the same as though done by God himself. The meaning of the word "to justify" is very clear and obvious in this case; it is just the opposite of "to condemn." It implies, first, *the existence of a law*, by which the persons placed under it are to be governed; secondly, that such persons are *responsible moral agents*, that is, possess the knowledge and ability to obey or disobey the law; and *thirdly, that they have rendered the obedience which that law requires*, and therefore are justified on the grounds of that obedience. So there is a just and righteous law by which

[1] Deut. xxv. 1.

God governs intelligent moral agents in all the universe, as men and angels. This law is the embodiment of the principles of moral right, and constitutes the rule or standard of right. By it we know what is right and what is wrong, good and evil, virtue and vice, sin and holiness. All those actions of moral agents, which are conformed to this law, are right, good, and holy; and all those which are contrary to it, are unrighteous, sinful, and wicked. And the substance of this law, according to the plain teaching of our Savior, *is love to God above all things, and to our neighbor as to ourselves.* "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."[1] This is the substance of the teaching of the whole Bible, and of all true religion. The religion of earth and of heaven, of men and of angels, and of all creatures in the entire universe of God, who are capable of any religion at all. It is to love their Maker supremely, and each other as themselves. All who do this render the obedience which the law requires, and are justified on the ground of that obedience. They are innocent and holy. They are conformed to the moral image of God: "For love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. * * God

[1] Matt. xxii. 37–40.

is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."[1]

This is justification by works, or the deeds of the law. Thus the holy angels are justified. They have never transgressed God's pure and holy law; but have always yielded the full and perfect obedience which it requires, and consequently they are innocent. They need no Savior. They have never fallen—have never been guilty of a single sin in thought, word, or deed, and have never failed in a single duty, and consequently they are justified and happy, because of their continued and perfect obedience of every part and precept of the law which God has given them. They have always loved him supremely, and each other as themselves.

It was by *works* also that our first parents were justified before the Fall. God gave them the moral law, made them fully acquainted with their duty, and bestowed upon them the requisite ability to discharge it, and appointed the single simple precept, that they should not eat of the fruit of a certain tree, as a test of their obedience. They had freedom of will—the power of choice and the ability to obey or disobey this law. Such freedom was necessary to their very being as moral agents. As long as they obeyed the law, they were justified on the grounds of that obedience; but as soon as they transgressed it, even in a single instance, they subjected themselves to its pen-

[1] 1 John iv. 7–16.

alty, which was death. Had they continued in obedience, they would have had no need of a Savior, but would have remained in a state of complete innocence and happiness forever.

2. *But it is evident that no guilty sinner, no transgressor, can be justified by the deeds of the law, because he is not innocent.* No matter how few or small his sins may appear in his own eyes, or how many and brilliant his good qualities, virtues, services, charities, and good works. If he has ever broken the law of God in *a single instance*, in thought, word, or deed, or failed to perform a single duty which it required, he has become guilty before God, and must suffer the penalty of the law, unless the law-giver himself devise some way of escape for him. "Perfect beings," says Dr. Dwight, "are justified by their own obedience; since they fulfill the demands of the divine law. Sinful beings cannot be thus justified; because they have not rendered that obedience, which is the only possible ground of justification by law."[1] Every individual of the human race, every child of fallen Adam, is therefore condemned by the law, and is under its curse, as St. Paul plainly declares: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."[2] Consequently he can never be declared innocent, or be justified by the deeds of that law. If a man had, up to a certain time, always lived a life of perfect obedience and holi-

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[1] Dwight's Theol., Vol. II., p. 300. [2] Gal. iii. 10.

ness, like an angel of God, and then had committed only *one* sin, and subsequently had again continued in perfect obedience, he would still be condemned. That one sin must destroy him forever. All his subsequent piety and holiness could not undo that one act, nor remove the curse and wipe away the stain. One drop of ink will soil a perfectly white garment—one drop of water upon a plate of polished steel will cause a rusty spot, so that it is no longer pure. And so one stain of sin upon the soul will constitue a plague spot, which "will eat as doth a canker,"[1] and can never be removed except by the blood of the Son of God.

The justification of the *sinner* by the deeds of the law is, therefore, simply an impossibility. Yet the Bible does often speak of the justification of sinners. What does it mean? What is it to justify a sinner, and how can this be done?

3. We reply that *to justify the guilty, means to pardon their sins, and impute to them the righteousness of Christ.* This is done not on account of any works, merits, or righteousness of their own, but by grace, through faith, for Christ's sake. He has taken their place, and suffered the penalty of the law in their stead; and, in virtue of his high dignity, as the Son of God, and his divine innocence, has honored the law and government of God more, than the infliction of its penalty upon all the guilty forever would have

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 17.

done, so that it is now made safe and proper for the "Judge of all the earth" to pardon penitent and believing sinners, and receive them into his divine favor. That is, the penalty of the law is remitted to them, and they are treated afterwards as if they had never broken it, purely for Jesus' sake. So St. Paul teaches: "To declare, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."[1]

Let us now look at some of those passages of God's Word, which most clearly and obviously teach this doctrine. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."[2] Here "peace with God" is the consequence of justification; hence, before we are justified, we have no peace with God; therefore, to justify us must mean, in this verse, to pardon our sins and to restore us to the favor of God. Again: "And by him (Jesus Christ) all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."[3] By the law of Moses, as we have seen, *sinners* cannot be justified, that is pardoned and restored to God's favor, because they are violators of that law, and are under its curse; but by faith in Christ, "all that believe," "are justified from all things." All their sins are forgiven, and they become "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." Again: "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall

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[1] Rom. iii. 26. [2] Rom. v. 1. [3] Acts xiii. 39.

bear their iniquities."[1] Here those who have "iniquities" shall be justified by Christ, who bears them in their stead; that is clearly, shall be pardoned for Jesus' sake. Once more: "Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."[2] In these verses Paul clearly and fully teaches the following vitally important doctrines of the Gospel: 1. That all men are sinners, and therefore need justification or pardon, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." 2. That to justify means to pardon sins and make men righteous before God; for Christ was "set forth for the remission of sins that are past, unto all and upon all them that believe." That is, sins that were committed by those who lived

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[1] Is. liii. 11. [2] Rom. iii. 20–26.

before the coming of Christ in the flesh, were pardoned on account of their faith in him who was to come, just as ours are pardoned on account of our faith in him who has come. There is but one Savior and one way of salvation for all men, whether living before or since his advent into the world. The cross of Christ is the *centre* of this world, and indeed of the whole moral universe. The saints of old, even from the very beginning, looked *forward* to him who was to come, and we look *back* to him who has come, and by faith all meet at the cross of the Son of God. Hence said Jesus: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."[1] 3. It is taught that this justification, or pardon and righteousness, cannot be obtained by the deeds of the law, for "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified in his sight." 4. That men are justified alone by FAITH in our Lord Jesus Christ, for "the righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe." 5. That the reason why it is possible, proper, and right, for God to justify the sinner, by and in consequence of his faith, is, because Jesus Christ has given his own life as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of men. He was "set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood for the remission of sins, that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." 6. That our faith does not merit pardon, but that we are justified "*freely*

[1] John xii. 32.

by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Perhaps we can make the subject plain by an illustration. Let us suppose ourselves in a court of justice. Here are two men arraigned as prisoners at the bar, charged with the crime of murder. The judge has taken his seat, the jury is impanneled, the witnesses are called, and the trial progresses. The case of the first prisoner is under consideration. The witnesses are carefully examined, the lawyers discuss the subject, the judge gives his charge to the jury, and they, after retiring a few moments, return a unanimous verdict of *not guilty* for this first prisoner. This man is now publicly declared innocent of the crime charged against him, and is immediately set at liberty—that is, he is *justified*. It now appears that he had not violated the law of his country, but had been falsely accused. He has been proved to be innocent, and the law cannot condemn him. It has no charge against him, and he stands acquitted. *This is justification by the deeds of the law.*

The second prisoner is now put upon his trial, and his case is given to the jury. They soon come into court again, and bring in a verdict of *guilty of murder in the first degree*. This prisoner is convicted of having broken the law of the land by maliciously taking the life of a fellow-being. The penalty for this crime is death by hanging. Accordingly he is condemned, and the judge pronounces the terrible sentence. The day for the execution is fixed, and

the man is sent back to prison to await the solemn time. Several weeks pass away, and the day of his death has come. A scaffold is erected and the gallows prepared. Multitudes have collected to witness the sad spectacle. What an awful sight! Enough to chill our very heart's blood. There stands the poor culprit under the gallows, with the blood of a fellow-man upon his soul, and in a few moments more he will stand before his God to meet his murdered victim at that judgment bar where nothing can be concealed. Sorrowfully his friends now take leave of him, and, while gazing upon the moving scene, every eye drops a silent tear. Five minutes more and his time will have expired! But see! see! Who is that hastening to the spot swiftly as the fleetest steed can bear him along! All eyes are now turned upon the rider. In another moment he rushes through the crowd, and, at the scaffold, he hands the sheriff a sealed letter. For an instant the multitude is almost convulsed with anxiety, until relieved by the shouts of pardon! pardon! which now roll, like peals of thunder, over the vast assembly. Overcome with emotion, the poor man sinks to the floor of his scaffold, and is taken up in a state of unconsciousness, soon to awake to the grand reality, that he is saved from death—that for certain satisfactory reasons, the Governor has bestowed upon him a full pardon. His crime is forgiven, and the penalty of the law is not inflicted. He is justified by grace, and restored to all the rights and privileges of citizenship in his country,

which, by his crime, he had lost. This is to justify the guilty. It is simply to pardon his crime, and restore him again to his forfeited rights and privileges.

So men, as sinners, have already been brought, as it were, before the Court of Heaven, and found guilty of innumerable violations of God's just and holy law. Sentence of condemnation has been pronounced upon them. They are doomed to suffer the penalty of that broken law, which is death temporal and eternal. No power in heaven or earth can save them from this doom, unless God himself can procure them a pardon. If he does do so, it must be in a manner consistent with his own infinite wisdom, holiness, and justice, and the good of his all-perfect government. And that he has done so, is the design of the Gospel to announce. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."[1] Jesus Christ has been given to take our place, has suffered the penalty of the law and fulfilled it in our stead, and has purchased eternal salvation for us. So the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament abundantly teach. "He was wounded for our transgressions; bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."[2] "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."[3] Hence a free and full

[1] John iii. 16. [2] Is. liii. 5. [3] Eph. i. 7.

pardon has been procured for us, and is offered to us, not because we are good or can merit a gift so grand and glorious, but because of the infinite love and mercy of God. This pardon becomes ours by faith, by accepting it as offered, and *when* we accept it. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."[1]

[1] John iii. 36.

CHAPTER II.

JUSTIFICATION—WHAT LUTHERANS HOLD AND BELIEVE ON THE SUBJECT—THEIR AUTHORITIES MUST SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

WHAT Lutherans believe and teach on this grand subject is fully and clearly set forth in their authorized creeds or symbolical books, as well as in the writings of their distinguished theologians. From both these sources, but especially from the former, we will now present such extracts as may seem necessary fully and clearly to unfold their views of the doctrine.

And as the *Augsburg Confession* is our principal creed, we will turn to it first.

The following is the language of the *Fourth Article* of this Confession: "Of Justification. It is taught further, that we cannot obtain righteousness and the forgiveness of sin before God by our own merits, works, and atonement; but that we obtain the remission of sins, and are justified before God, by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith; if we believe that Christ suffered for us, and that sins are remitted unto us for Christ's sake, and righteousness and eternal life are bestowed on us. For God accounts and im-

putes this faith to us as righteousness before himself, as St. Paul declares to the Romans (chapters third and fourth)."

Here let us carefully note what is taught: 1. That justification is "the forgiveness of sin before God, and righteousness and eternal life are bestowed on us." 2. That we cannot obtain this "by our own merits, works, and atonement." 3. That we obtain it "by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith." 4. That it is not any and every kind of faith that secures this blessing, but "if we believe that Christ suffered for us, and that sins are remitted unto us for Christ's sake, and righteousness and eternal life are bestowed on us." 5. That "God accounts and imputes this faith to us as righteousness before himself." 6. That all this is taught by St. Paul in the third and fourth chapters of his Epistle to the Romans.

In the Fifth Article of the Confession, the way and manner of obtaining this faith is set forth. The language is as follows: "For the purpose of obtaining this faith, God has instituted the ministry, and given the gospel and sacraments, by which, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who, in his own time and place, works faith in those that hear the gospel, which teaches, that through the merits of Christ, and not through our own merits, we have a merciful God, if we believe these things."

Here the following important questions may be asked, and are answered, leaving the discussion of the subjects for future chapters: 1. *How do we obtain*

justifying faith? We answer, that it is here implied that we do not have it by nature, nor do we obtain it by our own unaided efforts and powers, but the truth taught is, that "the Holy Spirit works faith in those that hear the Gospel." 2. *How is the Holy Spirit given?* Answer: "God has instituted the ministry, and given the Gospel and sacraments, by which, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit." This is God's order, and these are his ordinary means, which men may not set aside. It is, indeed, not denied that God may have other and extraordinary means, or may work without means. He is not limited or tied to means, but works when and where he pleases; but men are tied to means, and are bound to use them. 3. *What then are we to do that the Holy Spirit may be given to us, and "work faith" in us?* The answer is: "The Holy Spirit is given through means," and he also "works faith" through means. The means here mentioned are "the Ministry, the Gospel, and the Sacraments." Wherever, therefore, a proper ministry is ordained according to Christ's ordinance, the gospel truly and faithfully preached, and the sacraments rightly administered, there also the Holy Spirit is given. And as these means are not of human invention, but were instituted by God himself, they must be effectual in every case where they are properly used, and the workings of the Spirit by them are not resisted. "The Holy Spirit works faith in those that HEAR the gospel," that is, hear it properly, so as to receive and obey it. So the Savior also says:

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."[1] By means of the gospel and sacraments, the Savior stands, by his Spirit, and knocks at the sinner's heart, but does not break the door or force himself upon him—only when he "hears his voice," and "opens the door," will he come in and perform his divine work. It is clear that men may refuse to hear, and "resist the Holy Ghost," and never come to the exercise of true faith; but the fault is their own. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."[2] But the discussion of these matters we shall take up more fully hereafter.

Secondly, the *Apology*. The Apology to the Augsburg Confession was written by Melancthon, the great friend and companion of Luther, as an explanation and defense of the Confession, and deservedly holds a high rank among the symbols of the Lutheran Church. We take the following extracts from it on the subject under consideration: "Now, since Christ has been given unto us in order that he might take away these sins and the punishment of sins, and for our benefit overcome sin, death, and the kingdom of the devil, no one can sincerely rejoice in this great treasure, no one can conceive and estimate the abundant riches of grace, except he first feel this burden, our great inborn misery and

[1] Rev. iii. 20. [2] Acts vii. 51.

calamity. Wherefore, our preachers have taught with the greatest diligence this necessary article, and have taught nothing new, but the plain words of the Holy Scriptures, and the undeniable sayings of the fathers—Augustine and others." * * "Wherefore, if we receive the doctrine of our adversaries" (the Romanists) "that we can merit the forgiveness of our sins, by the powers of natural reason and our own works, we are Aristotelians and not Christians, and there is no difference between an honorable heathen, or Pharisaic life, and a Christian life, between philosophy and the gospel." * * "Yet it is certain that without faith in Christ, real love to God cannot exist in the human heart; nor can any one comprehend what love to God is without faith." * * "Wherefore the gospel recommends, preaches and applauds *that* righteousness which proceeds from faith in Christ, and which is not the righteousness of the law. The law does not teach such a righteousness, and this righteousness is far superior to that of the law." * * "But the divine promises offer to us, as to those who are overcome by sin and death, help, grace, and reconciliation for Christ's sake; which grace no man can obtain through works, but alone through faith in Christ. *This faith* does not offer or present to the Lord God any works, any merit of its own, but builds upon pure grace only, and knows of no other consolation or trust, than alone the mercy which is promised in Christ. Now this faith, as each one believes for himself that Christ

is given for him, obtains remission of sins solely for Christ's sake, and justifies us in the sight of God."

"And since this faith exists wherever there is true repentance, and raises up our hearts when sunk in the terrors of sin and death, we are regenerated through it; and through it is received into our hearts the Holy Ghost, who renews our hearts, so that we are enabled to keep the law of God, to fear and love him truly, and not to waver or doubt that Christ was given for us, and that he hears our cries and prayers, so that we can commend ourselves joyfully to God's will even in the midst of death. That faith then is true and genuine, which receives and obtains remission of sins without price, through grace, and which does not oppose to the wrath of God its own merits and works, which, at best, would be but as a feather against a tempest; but presents Christ, the Mediator. And this faith is the true knowledge of Christ. He, therefore, who thus believes, realizes the great benefit of Christ, and becomes a new creature; and prior to the existence of such faith in the heart, no one can fulfil the law."

"Therefore the faith which makes us pious and just in the sight of God consists not in a mere knowledge of the history of Christ, as his birth, sufferings, etc. (for this knowledge the devils also have), but it is that conviction, that certain, firm, inward confidence, with which, from our hearts, we hold the promises of God as true and sure, in consequence of which, without our merit, are offered unto us grace, entire

salvation, and the remission of sin, through Christ the Mediator."

"Therefore, whenever we speak of that faith which justifies, these three subjects present themselves together: first, the divine promises; secondly, that these offer to us grace freely and without our merit; and, thirdly, that the blood of Christ and his merits are the treasure from which recompense is made for sins. The promises are received through faith; but these offer grace unto us without our merit—all our worthiness and merits are excluded and sink to the ground, and the grace and boundless mercy of God alone are praised. But the merits of Christ are the treasure; for that must indeed be a treasure and noble pledge by which the whole world's debt of sin is paid."[1] These quotations from this noble Apology might be largely increased, but let this suffice. The language is plain, so that all, as it seems to us, can understand it.

Thirdly, *The Form of Concord.* "The Book of Concord, or Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," is the name given to a large volume of nearly 700 pages, and was first published in Europe in A. D., 1580, about 34 years after the death of Luther. It was designed to set forth fully the doctrines of the Lutheran Church, and, if possible, to unite all, who receive these doctrines, in one common faith. It contains the following separate Trea-

[1]Book of Concord, pps. 66, 70, 71, 76, 77, 78.

tises: The Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed, The Athanasian Creed, The Augsburg Confession, The Apology, The Smalcald Articles, Luther's Smaller Catechism, Luther's Larger Catechism, The Form of Concord, A Catalogue of Testimonies, and Articles of Visitation. The work has been adopted by a large part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as its Creed, and must therefore be received as authority in any statement of our doctrines. From that part of this volume called "The Form of Concord," we will now make some interesting and valuable quotations in regard to the Lutheran view of "Justification by Faith." They deserve special attention: "We believe, teach and confess unanimously, that Christ is our righteousness, neither according to the divine nature alone, nor yet according to the human nature alone, but the *whole Christ* according to both natures, exclusively in that obedience, which he, as God and man, rendered to the Father even in death, and by this has merited for us forgiveness of sins and eternal life; as it is written, Romans v. 19: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Again: "We believe, teach and confess, that our righteousness before God is this—that God forgives us our sins out of pure grace, without any regard to our antecedent, present, or subsequent works, merit, or worthiness; granting and imputing to us the righteousness of the obedience of Christ; on account

of which righteousness we are received into favor with God and reputed as just."

Further: "We believe, teach, and confess, that faith alone is the medium and instrument, by which we apprehend Christ; and, thus in Christ, we also apprehend this righteousness, which avails before God, for the sake of which, this faith is imputed to us for righteousness, according to St. Paul, Romans, iv. 5: 'But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.'"

And again: "We believe, teach and confess, that for the preservation of the pure doctrine concerning justification by faith before God, the *particulæ exclusivæ*, that is, the following words of the holy Apostle Paul, by which the merit of Christ is wholly separated from our works, and the honor attributed to Christ alone, are to be maintained with special diligence, where the holy Apostle Paul writes: 'by grace;' 'freely;' 'not by the law;' 'without works;' 'without the deeds of the law;'[1] all of which words signify as much as that we are righteous and saved *alone* through faith in Christ."

Once more: "We believe, teach and confess, that although an antecedent contrition and subsequent good works do not pertain to this article of justification before God, yet there must not be feigned such a faith as can consist with an evil intention to sin and

[1] Eph. ii. 5, 8; Rom. iii. 24, 28, *et* iv. 6; Gal. iii. 11.

act contrary to conscience; but, after man is justified through faith, then there is a true and living faith *working by love*, Gal. v. 6. So that good works always follow justifying faith, and are continually and certainly found with it, when it is true and living; as it is never alone, but always accompanied by love and hope."[1]

We must take one quotation more from the "Form of Concord," because of its remarkable clearness and beauty. It is as follows: "For Faith justifies us, not because it is itself so good a work and beautiful a virtue; but because, in the promise of the holy gospel, it apprehends and appropriates the merits of Christ; for these merits must be applied and imputed to us by faith, if we are to be justified thereby. So that the righteousness, which, before God, is ascribed to faith, and through pure grace imputed to believers, is the obedience, sufferings and resurrection of Christ, who has rendered complete satisfaction to the law for us, and paid our debt of sin. For since Christ was not alone man, but God and man in one undivided person, he must be the Lord of the law, and therefore not under the law, any more than under obligation to suffer and die on his own account. Therefore his obedience, not only in suffering and dying, but also in submitting voluntarily to be put under the law in our stead, and fulfilling it by such obedience, is imputed to us for righteousness. Hence, on account

[1] Book of Concord, pages 474, 475, 543, 544.

of the whole of this obedience, rendered to his Heavenly Father in our stead, in all that he did and suffered, in living and dying, God forgives our sins, regards us as innocent and righteous, and grants us eternal salvation. This righteousness is offered to us by the Holy Spirit through the gospel and in the sacraments, and is applied, imputed, and accepted by faith: therefore believers have reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, divine grace, and are sons of God and heirs of everlasting life."

Fourthly, Luther. We must now hear the valuable testimony of Luther himself on this great subject. We shall make brief quotations from his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, and from his Preface to the Epistle to the Romans: "The Papists," says he, "attribute the merit of grace and remission of sins to the work wrought. For, they say, that a good work before grace, is able to obtain grace of *congruence*, because it is proper that God should reward such a work. But when grace is obtained, the work following *deserves* everlasting life on account of its worthiness, and as a debt due." This is what they call, *Meritum de congruo*, and *meritum de condigno*. "But we, instead of this, do place FAITH, and we say that faith apprehends Jesus Christ, who is the form which adorneth and beautifieth faith, as color adorneth and beautifieth the wall. Christian faith, therefore, is not an idle quality or empty husk in the heart, which may be in deadly sin until charity come and quicken it; but if it be true faith, is a sure trust and confidence

in the heart, and a firm consent whereby Christ is apprehended: so that Christ is the object of faith, yea rather in faith even Christ himself is present." * * "Wherefore Christ apprehended by faith, and dwelling in the heart, is the true Christian righteousness, for the which God counteth us righteous, and giveth us eternal life."

First, a man must be taught by the law to know himself, so that he may learn to say with the Apostle: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."[1] * * "They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."[2] "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight."[3] Thus we, by a contrary way, do drive men from the merit of congruence and worthiness. Now, when a man is humbled by the law, and brought to the knowledge of himself, then follows true repentance (for true repentance begins at the fear and judgment of God), and he sees himself to be so great a sinner, that he can find no means how he may be delivered from his sins by his own strength, works, and merits. Then he perceives well what Paul means when he speaks of man as the servant and bond slave of sin, and that God hath shut up all under sin—that the whole world is guilty before God. Then he sees that all the divinity of the Schoolmen, touching the merit of congruence and worthiness, is mere foolishness, and that by this means the

[1] 1 Rom. iii. 23. [2] Ps. xiv. 3. [3] Ps. li. 4.

whole Papacy falls. Here now he begins to sigh and ask: Who then can give succor? For, being thus terrified by the law, he utterly despairs of his own strength: he looks around and sighs for the help of a Mediator and Savior. Here then comes, in good time, the healthful word of the Gospel, which says: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."[1] Believe in Christ Jesus crucified for thy sins. If thou feel thy sins and the burden thereof, look not upon them in thyself, but remember that they are taken from thee, and laid upon Christ, "by whose stripes thou art healed." "This is the beginning of health and salvation. By this means we are delivered from sin, justified, and made heirs of everlasting life; not for our own works and deserts, but for our faith, whereby we lay hold upon Christ." * * "Here is to be noted, that these three things, Faith, Christ, and Acceptation or Imputation, must be joined together. Faith taketh hold of Christ, and hath him present, and holdeth him inclosed in the heart, as the ring doth the precious stone. And whosoever shall be found having this confidence in Christ apprehended in the heart, him will God account for righteous. This is the means, and this is the merit whereby we attain the remission of sins and righteousness. "Because thou believest in me," saith the Lord, "and thy faith layeth hold upon Christ, whom I have freely given unto thee, that he might be thy Mediator and

[1] Matt. ix. 2.

High Priest, therefore be thou justified and righteous." Wherefore God doth accept or account us as righteous only for our faith in Christ." * * "A Christian therefore, is not he which hath no sin, but he to whom God doth not impute sin on account of his faith in Christ." * * "Such a man is, in one sense, above law and sin, for he hath Christ, the Lord of the law, present and inclosed in the heart, even as a ring hath a jewel or precious stone inclosed in it." * * "Therefore through faith in Christ all things are given unto us—grace, peace, forgiveness of sins, salvation, and everlasting life."[1]

"Faith is a divine work in us, which changes and regenerates us." * * "It is a living, deliberate confidence in the grace of God." * * "Grace signifies the kindness and favor of God."[2]

Fifthly, Other Lutheran Authorities. We will translate a passage from Hunnius, who lived in the former half of the seventeenth century. He says: "Properly, justification is nothing else than the forgiveness of sins, and the remission of the punishment due to them, so that sinful man shall be regarded and declared righteous, as if he had never committed any sin or become guilty before God." * * "The meaning of the word is well understood from the proceedings of the courts, in which he is justified, who, having been accused of transgression, proved guilty and condemned to suffer punishment, is nevertheless released

[1] Com. on Gal., pp. 235–239. [2] Preface to Rom., pp. 5–7.

by grace, pardoned of the unrighteousness of his deed, and is again declared righteous and treated as such. In like manner we, with all the world, brought before the judgment bar of God, and proven guilty sinners, are nevertheless pardoned, out of grace, for the sake of our great Advocate, Jesus Christ, when we truly believe in him, and are regarded and declared righteous."[1]

"By justification," says Schmid, in his Dogmatic Theology, "we understand that act of God, by which he removes the sentence of punishment, which was suspended over man on account of his sins, and declares him absolved from guilt, and made a partaker of the merits of Christ."[2]

"Justification," says Dr. S. S. Schmucker, "is that judicial act of God, by which, a believing sinner, in consideration of the merits of Christ, is released from the penalty of the law, and is declared to be entitled to heaven."[3]

Similar quotations from Lutheran authorities might be extended to any length; but we suppose that those now given are amply sufficient to show how our Church has held and taught this great doctrine from the Reformation down to the present time. We preferred that these authorities themselves should first be heard, without many comments of our own,

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[1] Hunnius, Glaubenslehre, p. 207.

[2] Schmid's Dogmatik, p. 330.

[3] Popular Theol., p. 136.

so that every intelligent reader might see for himself what they did contain. In the next chapter we shall endeavor to analyze the whole subject, as presented in these authorities, in the light of the Word of God.

CHAPTER III.

JUSTIFICATION—WHAT THE FOREGOING AUTHORITIES REALLY TEACH AND IMPLY—THE WHOLE SUBJECT ANALYZED, ILLUSTRATED, AND CONFIRMED BY THE WORD OF GOD.

THE whole doctrine of justification by faith is based upon the fact *that man is a guilty and condemned sinner, and needs pardon and righteousness.* He has original and actual sin, and must perish forever if not delivered from it. "Original sin is the inbred depravity of our nature, which renders us incapable of doing good, and inclined to every species of evil."[1] This is a *state* or *condition* of sin, in which all are when they come into the world, without any acts of their own, even previous to the years of moral responsibility. Men may deny this as they will, or call it by soft names, but the *fact* remains that the whole race is morally diseased, and must have help. As certain as the nature of the oak is in the acorn before the future tree is grown—the nature of the serpent in the egg, before that egg is hatched—the nature of the tiger in the young animal when it is yet helpless

[1] Catechism, p. 27.

and harmless—so certain is it that the sinful nature of man is in man from his birth. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."[1] "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."[2] And this "inborn corruption," or "natural depravity" is universal with our fallen race. So the Bible teaches, and so the facts of man's history teach. Says St. Paul: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so" (rather "thus also" καὶ οὕτως,) "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."[3] As death has universal sway, even over children; and as it is caused by sin; so it is clear that by the fall of Adam sin became universal with man. We may not be able to explain *how* this is; but certainly no man can honestly deny the fact.

Nor is this a mere *negative* state, in which man has suffered loss—has lost "the image of God"—lost his innocence and holiness—become alienated from God and all good; but there is also the *presence* of real evil and impurity. There is not only the absence of moral health, but also the presence and workings of moral disease. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither mollified with ointment."[4] Hence our Church says: "And this innate disease, or original sin, is truly sin, and condemns all those under the

[1] John iii. 6. [2] Ps. li. 5. [3] Rom. v. 12. [4] Is. i. 5, 6.

eternal wrath of God, who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit."[1] The consequence is that it is as *natural* for man to sin, as it is for "the sparks to fly upward," or the stream to flow down hill; whilst holiness and the love and service of God are all against nature. *Actual* sin is therefore only a development of original sin—the outward and personal manifestation of the inward disease in the transgression of God's law—the legitimate fruit of the natural tree—the corrupt waters which the poisoned fountain sends forth.

And this shows the true nature and origin of sin. It did not originate in the *will of God*, but in the will of the devil and of man. So says an apostle: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law. * * He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning."[2] Man is therefore *guilty*. Not merely unfortunate, but criminal, a rebel against the government and will of God. In acting out the corrupt desires of his fallen nature he has added, and is daily adding, innumerable actual sins, sins of commission and omission, doing the wrong and neglecting the right—sins of deeds and words, as well as of the heart; for all God's holy commandments may be broken in the *heart* by thoughts, feelings, motives, and desires, and are always broken in the heart *first*. A man never commits a murder, or steals, who has

[1] Augs. Conf. Art. II. [2] John iii. 4, 8.

not murdered and stolen in his heart first; and so of all sin. Hence we are all by nature under the curse of the divine law, as St. Paul declares: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."[1] "Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."[2]

In the next place, it is equally evident *that man cannot deliver himself from this sad condition.* He has no ability, skill, or wisdom for such a work. The moral disease is too deeply rooted, and too powerful; he cannot eradicate or remove it. The whole history of the race, no less than the Word of God, proves this. Heathen nations, left to themselves, instead of becoming better, have constantly been becoming worse—more ignorant, more degraded, and more helpless. Only where the light of revelation has, to some degree, shined upon them, have there appeared signs of improvement. Nor have infidels and rejectors of Christianity, in civilized lands, fared any better. No system of education, morals, or philosophy, has been discovered, nor degree of enlightenment attained, that could at all take the place of the religion of Jesus in the healing of humanity's woes, or the elevation of the race. The failure, in this respect, has been so overwhelming and complete, as to prove every man

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[1] Gal. iii. 10. [2] Rom. iii. 19.

a fool who attempts anything of the kind without the powerful aid of our divine and holy Christianity. All systems for the education and improvement of the race, without religion, will not only fail, as they always have failed, of their object, but will dig the grave of all real advancement and prosperity as well. Mere intellectual culture cannot eradicate or subdue men's evil passions—cannot overcome their lusts, nor renew and sanctify their corrupt natures—cannot remove the deep, dark stains of evil from the soul, nor take away the love of sin and vice, nor restore the love of God and holiness. A stronger than a human arm must do this, and a greater wisdom than man's, devise a plan for his recovery. Much less can he make good the violated law of his God, or lift its curse from himself, or repair the injury done to the divine government, or maintain its honor and justice, by any atonement and satisfaction of his own. No tears, or penitence, or good works, can make it safe or proper for God, as the great moral Governor of the Universe, to pardon the rebel. God is bound to maintain the honor, purity, and justice of his own perfect moral government untouched and untarnished forever: bound by all the glorious perfections of his character, and by all the high obligations under which he has placed himself to the obedient and holy inhabitants of his eternal kingdom. No rebel may be pardoned, or restored to the divine favor, until that great divine government be first fully vindicated, and that good and pure law honored as much or

more, as would have been the case, had its penalty been inflicted upon transgressors forever. This, we claim, has been done in the atonement for sin made by Jesus Christ, and this is the ground of the sinner's pardon by faith in him. He, being both God and man, and being *above* the law, as its author, voluntarily placed himself under that law, took our place, suffered its penalty in our stead, rendered the obedience which it required, and which we had not rendered, and, in our fallen condition, could not render, and thus he so fulfilled and honored the divine law and government, that it is now safe and proper for God to pardon the sins of all those who repent and believe in Jesus. His atonement is full, perfect, and all-sufficient for all sin, original and actual, and for all men, so that salvation is provided for all. Hence we have such strong and plain passages, in the Word of God, as the following: "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."[1] "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."[2] "He is made unto us, of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."[3] "For God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."[4]

It is clear that the two great facts now presented,

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[1] Is. liii. 5. [2] 1 Cor. i. 30. [3] 2 Cor. v. 21. [4] Gal. iii. 13.

namely man's utter depravity and helplessness, and his redemption by Christ, lie at the foundation of all that is taught in the Scriptures and in the Creed of the Church on the subject of Justification by Faith. We do not design to pursue these points further here. We wish only that the reader should understand them, and keep them in mind, while we continue our discussion.

Justification, as we have clearly seen, includes *two things: Pardon of sin, and Righteousness before God.* "We obtain remission of sins," * * "and righteousness and eternal life are bestowed upon us."[1] It thus has a *negative* and a *positive* side. It *absolves* and it *imputes*. It *takes away* something, and it *gives* something; or, it does *not impute sin*, but *does impute righteousness*. Let us hear the Word of God: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."[2] And St. Paul says: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."[3] And as sin is not imputed to those who are justified, so we are clearly taught that righteousness is imputed to them. "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God."[4] In Romans iv. 3, we have it: "Abraham believed God, and it was *counted* unto him for righteousness," and in

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[1] Aug. Con., Art. IV. [2] Ps. xxxii. 1, 2. [3] 2 Cor. v. 19. [4] Jas. ii. 23.

the 10th verse of the same chapter, it is "reckoned;" but in the Greek, the word is the same in all these passages, "imputed," "counted," "reckoned," are all the same in the original. It is clear that to *forgive* transgressions, and to *cover* sins, is not to impute them, but to deliver us from them, to remove them and take them away; then to impute to us righteousness is to "reckon," "count," and bestow it upon us —to give us what we did not have before, and what is not of our own procuring.

What then does justification *take away?* We have said that it takes away *sin;* and so it does take away all sin, original and actual. The justified man is *absolutely and perfectly free from every sin*—not a single spot or stain of sin remains upon his soul. If this were not so he could not be in a state of justification. Hence, says Paul: "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."[1] The Redeemed "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."[2] This is a *Christian perfection*, which not merely a few distinguished saints have, but which all true believers have whenever they believe in Jesus Christ, and as long as they truly believe in him.

But this does not mean that they can no longer be called *sinners*. This humiliating fact still remains, and will always remain. Hence Luther said, as we

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[1] 1 Cor. vi. 11. [2] Rev. vii. 14.

have seen, "A Christian, therefore, is not he which hath no sin; but he to whom God does not impute sin, on account of his faith in Christ." The pardon of a man who has committed murder, does not make it *untrue* that he did commit that terrible crime. The *fact* still stands against him. What was once true can never become untrue. What has once been done can itself never be undone. The Prodigal Son, after he had returned to the father's house, and had been fully pardoned and received into the family again—his filthy garments taken off, and "the best robe" brought forth and put on him, "a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet"—was still "The Prodigal Son." So it will still be true to all eternity that we are *sinners;* but sinners with their sins taken away—sinners pardoned, washed, cleansed, sanctified, not in ourselves, but in Christ, "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world:"[1] sinners accepted in the "Beloved"—sinners "saved by grace"—out of hell and brought home to glory.

Nor does justification take away sin in the sense of making us *intrinsically holy* as to ourselves, and as a thing separate from that pure, spotless white robe of the Savior's righteousness, which HE PUTS ON US when we believe. It does not take away all our sinful *habits* and give us good and holy habits. It is not the same as *sanctification*, and must not be confounded with it. "Sanctification is a divine work *in*

[1] John i. 29.

us," but justification is a divine work *for* us. Justification is an *instantaneous* work, an act of God performed in the court of heaven for us; but sanctification "is a progressive conformity to the divine law, and an increasing ability to fulfill its requisitions, wrought in the faithful believer by the Spirit of God, through the means of grace."[1] Sanctification, in its widest sense, as the process of making men holy, might be said to include justification, as well as repentance and conversion, and to begin before it; but it also continues afterwards, during the whole life of the Christian on earth, as he "grows in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,"[2] until perfected in glory. A very great change takes place in the sinner when he is justified, and is inseparably connected with it, but it is not justification. There must be knowledge of sin, conviction of our guilt and danger, sorrow for sin deep and real, confession of sin, forsaking sin, coming to Christ, or trusting and believing in him, all preceding and connected with justification, but these do not constitute it. Repentance, conversion, regeneration, are terms applied, with more or less latitude, to parts or to the whole of this change; but, as we have seen, justification is not something wrought *in* the sinner at all, but is an act of God's mercy performed in heaven *for* him. The father of the Prodigal may have seen that a very great change had taken place in the son, and

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[1] Schmucker's Pop. Theol., p. 161. [2] 2 Pet. iii. 18.

that this was the beginning of a life of obedience and purity for all the future; but what he did for him now was not to make him holy and good, but simply to *forgive* him, and receive him back to his heart and his home, not as one of his "hired servants," as he had asked, but as HIS SON. "This, my son, was dead, and is alive again."

Nor does justification take away sin in the sense that it makes him *infallible, so that he can never sin again; nor does it raise him above the reach and power of temptation.* The converted and justified man is the same physically that he was before. He has the same body and the same soul, with all the same members and faculties; and he is still in the same sinful world, and surrounded by the same persons, influences, and circumstances. He has the same human nature of flesh and blood, in which not[1] ing is or can be absolutely perfect; and he is still in a state of probation, which implies trials and conflicts of every sort. True, he has repented of his sins, confessed and forsaken them, and they have been forgiven and taken away, and, by the grace of God, he has obtained the victory over them—over the flesh, the world, and the devil; but these conquered enemies will renew the attack again, and the more fiercely, because he has triumphed over them, and their hold upon him has been broken. And this warfare we must wage, and this contest we must carry on during our whole lifetime. But with the help of God we may and shall conquer. Hence the stirring exhorta-

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tion of the apostle: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood" (only), "but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."[1] That under such circumstances, and in such contests, the justified believer should often come short, and fall into sins of weakness and infirmity, is clearly taught us both by Scripture and experience; but these are not *willful* sins. And even holy beings are not beyond the reach of temptation. Our first parents in Paradise were not beyond its reach; but under its power they yielded to its influence, and fell from God. And our blessed Savior even, though he "was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens,"[2] was subject to most terrible assaults of Satan, and we cannot be above our Master; and his successful resistance should teach us, that by his grace we also can come off victoriously.

But if justification does not take away sin in the several senses now given, the question returns, *What does it take away?* And on so important a point we wish, if possible, to be precise and clear. We answer

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[1] Eph. vi. 10–13. [2] Heb. ix. 26.

then, that the word, restricted to its own proper meaning, does not include what *precedes* and *follows* justification—it is not repentance, conversion, regeneration, and sanctification—but expresses simply God's gracious *act of pardon*, and it takes away sin as the atonement of Christ takes it way—as his blood cleanses and washes the soul—takes away sin as to its guilt, power, and pollution—as to its punishment and penalty—the curse of the violated law, or the sentence of condemnation suspended over us. It takes away all fear or dread of the wrath of God, and enables us to look upon him as our dear Father in heaven, and we are now his children indeed, reconciled through Jesus Christ our Lord. "For," says Paul, "ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."[1] A sweet and heavenly peace fills the soul, which until now was under terror and alarm. These dark clouds are now dispersed, and our heavens become bright and clear. The lightnings, and thunders, and tempest, have ceased, and the glory that radiates from the cross of Jesus gilds over the whole scene.

But what does justification *give* or *impute?* This we have already seen in part incidentally. It gives and assures us of pardon, the *fact*, the reality of forgiveness; not a sham, a falsehood, a mere fancy or notion; but the grand and glorious fact that, for

[1] Rom. viii. 15.

Jesus' sake, all our sins are forgiven. Not a mere promise, however true and sweet, that we *shall be* forgiven at some future time; but that we are *now* pardoned—that the blessed reality is already in our possession! "Now," says the beloved John, "are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."[1] "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."[2] "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."[3]

The faith which justifies us also unites us to Christ, as the branch is united to the vine, as the Saviour himself teaches: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me, ye can do nothing."[4] And St. Paul, in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, gives us a grand and glorious enumeration of the blessings of justification by faith: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have PEACE with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Then "we have ACCESS," or introduction into the state of grace, "wherein we stand;" then we "REJOICE IN HOPE of the glory of God," and "we glory in TRIBULATIONS also," because they work patience, and experience, and hope—yes, a grand and sure HOPE, which maketh not ashamed; "because the love of God is shed

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[1] 1 John iii. 2. [2] Rom. viii. 1. [3] 1 John i. 7. [4] John xv. 5.

abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."[1]

It gives us new life on earth and eternal life in heaven. It secures to us all the blessings of Christ's redemption here and hereafter, and all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. But we do not intend to enlarge upon these great blessings now, as the subject will come up again.

There is, however, one thing which it gives, which must not be passed over now, namely *Righteousness.* In connection with this subject the word righteousness is used in a *two-fold* sense; as it is *our own*, and as it is that of another *imputed* to us. In the abstract righteousness is "conformity of heart and life to the divine law." That individual is righteous or has righteousness, whose heart and life are in agreement with the requirements of the law of God in all things, and this is the same as holiness. We do not have this by nature, being sinful, and of ourselves never could obtain it. Our hearts and lives, as we have seen, have not been, and are not, conformed to the divine law, and we are not able to recover what we have lost, or to bring ourselves into such conformity. But "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."[2] How then shall we be fitted to appear before the Lord, or to "stand in his holy place?" If we have no "wedding garment" of our own in which we dare come before "the King"—no righteousness which

[1] Rom. v. 1–5. [2] Heb. xii. 14.

"availeth before the Lord;" can we obtain it from another? Yes, blessed be God, from the King himself, for he has procured it for us, offers it to us, and by faith we take it, put it on, and wear it. This "wedding garment" is the righteousness of Christ *imputed* to us by faith. By faith we are justified—that is all our sins are taken away, and the pure and perfect righteousness of Jesus is reckoned, counted, or set over to us as our own by gift of free grace. It is put on us, as a new and beautiful garment the moment we truly believe, and in it we stand perfect and complete. How strikingly this is presented in that sweet hymn of Zinzendorf:

"Christi Blut und Gerechtigkeit,
Das ist mein Schmuck und Ehrenkleid;
Darin will ich vor Gott bestehn,
Wenn ich zum Himmel werd eingehn.

"Und wenn ich durch des Herrn Verdienst
Noch so treu würd in meinem Dienst,
Dasz ich käm allem Bösen ab,
Und sündigte nicht bis ins Grab:

"So will ich wann ich zu ihm komm,
Doch denken nicht an gut und fromm;
Nur dies: hier kommt ein Sünder her,
Der gern aus Gnaden selig wär."

John Wesley has given us a fine English hymn based upon this German one, but only his *first verse* can be regarded as a translation of the original. Why he did not translate the whole, but soared away to other heights, we can only conjecture. Did it per-

haps not agree with his "Christian Perfection" ideas? The following is Wesley's first verse:

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are, my glorious dress:
'Midst flaming worlds, in these array'd,
With joy shall I lift up my head."

There is nothing about "flaming worlds" in the original, and Mr. Wesley seems to have ascended too high at the start. It is the grand simplicity of the manner in which the glorious truth of "Christ our righteousness" is presented, that gives the original its sweetness.

Perhaps the following, though less poetical than Wesley's hymn, is nearer the German in sense and simplicity:

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress:"
In these my God and Judge I'll meet,
When in heaven I take my seat.

And could I, by Christ's merits free,
So faithful in my service be,
As to escape all evil clear,
And sin no more till death appear:

Yet when to Him I shall go forth,
I will not think of good or worth;
Only this: "Lord! before thy face,
There stands 'a sinner saved by grace.'"

Justification by faith and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us must be *followed* by a new and holy life, or the production of personal righteousness in our souls, that is, the conformity of our hearts and lives to the law of God, as the Scriptures abundantly

teach. St. Paul says: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."[1] "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."[2] And this "new obedience," or righteousness, or holiness, is not mere external morality, or a correct deportment, although it includes this; but it is also purity of heart and of the inner life. But this subject will come up in its proper place hereafter.

It may be well to state here that the doctrine of the *imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer* has been rejected as unscriptural by some good men. Among others by Dr. James Macknight, a Scottish divine, the author of an able commentary on the "Apostolical Epistles." In a note on Romans iii. 28, he says: "But it hath been said, that faith alone is necessary to men's justification, because thereby they lay hold on the righteousness of Christ, and receive it by imputation. To this it is sufficient to answer, that no such operation of faith is taught in Scripture. Neither is it said there that Christ's righteousness is *imputed* to believers. What the Scripture saith is, that the believer's faith is imputed, 'or counted to him for righteousness.' Romans iv. 3." And again

[1] Eph. iv. 22–24. [2] 2 Cor. v. 17.

he says: "Further, as it is nowhere said in Scripture, that Christ's righteousness was imputed to Abraham, so neither is it said anywhere, that Christ's righteousness is imputed to believers. In short, the uniform doctrine of the Scripture is, that the believer's 'faith is counted to him for righteousness,' by the mere grace or favor of God through Jesus Christ; that is on account of what Christ hath done to procure that favor for them. This is very different from the doctrine of those who hold, that by having faith imputed or counted for righteousness, the believer becomes perfectly righteous; whether they mean thereby that faith is itself a perfect righteousness, or that it is the instrument of conveying to the believer the perfect righteousness of another. With respect to the first, it is not true that faith is a perfect righteousness; for if it were, justification would not be a free gift, but a debt. And with respect to the second supposition, although the perfect righteousness of another were conveyed to the sinner by faith, it would not make him perfectly righteous; because it is beyond the power of omnipotence itself, by any means whatever, to make a person not to have sinned, who actually hath sinned. And yet, unless this is done, no believer can be perfectly righteous. On account of the perfect righteousness of another, God, indeed, may treat one as if he were perfectly righteous. But this is all. Nor does the Scripture carry the matter further."[1] Thus far Dr. Macknight.

[1] Macknight on the Epistles, Rom. iv. 3.

What a pity that so great and good a man, with others of the same school, should be, to say the least, so sadly confused, self-contradictory, and so much in the dark, on so grand and vital a doctrine of our common Protestant Christianity. In contrast with this, how gloriously shines the light from our Lutheran authorities. Without being tedious, in reply, beyond what has already been presented, we may say, that if the doctrine of *imputation* be not true, then we could have no Saviour at all; for Christ and his atonement, and all the blessings of his salvation, can in no way become ours except by *imputation*, gift, or by being "reckoned" or "counted" to us. But can you separate Christ's righteousness from him? Can Christ himself be ours, and we not have his righteousness? No, blessed be God! when I have Jesus, I have him with all that he has and is. And as Christ becomes mine by faith, so also does his righteousness. Our righteousness then, primarily, is *Christ himself*. So the Prophet calls him: "The Lord our righteousness."[1] So St. Paul teaches: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."[2] "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."[3] The fact simply is that our faith lays hold of *Christ* with all that he is and has, and of course also of his righteousness, and the WHOLE CHRIST is ours—not half a Christ, or a divided Christ—not a shadow, but a

[1] Jer. xxiii. 6. [2] Rom. x. 4. [3] 1 Cor. i. 30.

substance—not a sham or a delusion, but a reality. Not making ourselves, or our own works or merits, or faith, *saviors*, but having the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Word that "was made flesh" as our Savior—yea, as our "all in all" by faith.

At the same time, as this faith continues, and constantly holds on to Christ, he "abides in us and we in him,"[1] and we not only have his righteousness imputed to us, but he also, by his Spirit, works a personal righteousness in us—a conformity of our hearts and lives to the law of God. For true "faith worketh by love;"[2] "purifying their hearts by faith;"[3] "and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."[4] It is the whole Christ, as to both his natures, as God has given him, that our faith grasps and will not let go. "We believe, teach, and confess unanimously, that Christ is our righteousness, neither according to the divine nature alone, nor yet according to the human nature alone, but the whole Christ according to both natures."[5] In other words, Christ, in our stead, rendered a perfect obedience to the whole law, having been put under it for our sakes; and this obedience constitutes the righteousness which is imputed to us by faith, as if it were our own, as St. Paul teaches: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."[6]

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[1] John xv. 4. [2] Gal. v. 6. [3] Acts xv. 9. [4] 1 John v. 4. [5] Form of Con., p. 474. [6] Rom. v. 19.

Nor is there any contradiction between the expressions, "*Faith* is imputed to us for righteousness," and "*Christ* is our righteousness," or "The *obedience* of Christ is imputed to us for righteousness." All these expressions mean the *same thing*. This Macknight does not seem to have seen at all, and hence his difficulties. Thus the passages, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness," and "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness," and that other one, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," all teach one and the same great truth. Abraham obtained righteousness, and was saved in the same way that *we* obtain it and are saved. How? By faith. He believed in God as he knew him, as he had then been revealed to him, and in a Redeemer yet to come, and this "was counted unto him for righteousness;" we believe in God as we know him, as he has been more clearly and fully revealed to us, and in the Redeemer who *has* come, and this "faith is counted unto us for righteousness." Faith must have an object; that object in both cases is Christ. Abraham and all the believers who lived before the time of Christ, even from the beginning, looked *forward* to the Redeemer who should come, and we look *back* to him who has come, and on Calvary we meet, and all exclaim: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."[1] Hence Jesus says: "Abraham

[1] John i. 29.

rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad."[1] Of the Old Testament saints it is said: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth."[2]

Now, as true faith, in every case, must apprehend and hold on to Christ, to count it for righteousness is the same as to have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. Without Christ faith is nothing—with him it is everything. "Faith alone is the medium and instrument by which we apprehend Christ; and, thus in Christ, we also apprehend this righteousness, which avails before God, for the sake of which this faith is imputed to us for righteousness."[3]

Let us hear also the following declaration of the authors of the *Form of Concord* on this subject: "It is likewise rightly asserted, that believers who have been justified by faith in Christ, first have the imputed righteousness of faith, and afterwards the incipient righteousness of new obedience or good works, in this life. But these two" (kinds of righteousness) "must not be confounded, or at the same time introduced into the article of justification by faith in the sight of God. For, since this incipient righteousness, or renovation in us, is imperfect and impure in this life, in consequence of the flesh, the individual cannot, in this righteousness, stand acquitted before the

[1] John viii. 56. [2] Heb. xi. 13. [3] Form of Con., p. 474.

judgment-bar of God; but the righteousness of the obedience, sufferings and death of Christ alone, which is imputed to us by faith, can stand before the justice of God; for the sake, therefore, of Christ's obedience alone, the individual, even after his renovation, can become pleasing to God, acceptable to him, and be received as a child and heir of eternal life, although he may have performed many good works, and may be leading the best life."[1]

The fact simply is, that it is not on account of *our own* righteousness, or regeneration, or sanctification, or merits, or good works, or good life, or anything that we have, or are, or can be or become, that we are justified and can stand before God acquitted; but by faith, through grace, for Jesus' sake. The man that would be saved must *look away* from himself altogether, and look to Christ alone. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."[2] This will enable us to see clearly the meaning of certain words and phrases used in the Scriptures on this subject: as "by grace," "by faith," "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."[3] "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."[4] "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his

[1] Form of Con., page 547. [2] John iii. 36. [3] Rom. iii. 24. [4] Ephesians, ii. 8.

own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."[1]

First, then, our justification, our pardon and salvation, are *by grace*. "Being justified freely by his grace." Not therefore by our own merits, goodness, efforts, or works; for grace is just the *opposite* of these, and means simply the free and unmerited love and favor of God, shown to us not when we were good and deserved it, but when we were guilty and condemned in sin. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. * * But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."[2] On this point our authorities are most clear, full, and explicit, and we need not enlarge upon them now. We have many such expressions as the following: "Faith builds upon pure grace only." "God forgives our sins out of pure grace." "Grace signifies the kindness and favor of God." It may well be said, therefore, that the *originating* cause of our justification is the love of God; the *procuring* cause, the merits of Christ; and the *instrumental* cause, true faith.

"*For Christ sake*." "Faith obtains the remission of sins solely for Christ's sake, and justifies us in the sight of God." "The merit of Christ is wholly separated from our works, and the honor attributed to Christ alone." All this has already been sufficiently set forth.

[1] 2 Tim. i. 9. [2] Rom. v. 6, 8.

"*Through faith.*" "Faith is the medium and instrumentality by which we apprehend Christ." There is no way of coming to Christ, or laying hold upon him, or having any share or interest in him, but by FAITH. No "bodily exercise," or penitence, or crying, or tears, nor any human machinery, spiritually applied, can bring us to Jesus, without faith. No, not the Word of God, nor the preaching of the gospel even, nor prayer, nor the sacraments of the church, nor the power of minister, priest, or pope. None of these possess any such power in themselves as to bring us to Christ and make us partakers of him, without faith. We are shut up to the necessity of *believing* in Jesus, or of being lost. It is faith always, in the beginning, middle, and end of our course.

CHAPTER IV.

FAITH, ITS NATURE—HISTORICAL OR DEAD FAITH, AND EVANGELICAL OR LIVING FAITH—IT CONSISTS OF TWO PARTS: 1. BELIEF OF THE TRUTH; 2. TRUST IN CHRIST.

IF Faith accomplishes such great things, and holds so high a place in practical religion, it must be of the very first importance that we should clearly and fully understand its nature, and know for ourselves precisely what it is.

What then is the nature of Faith? We must know this not as a matter of speculation, or mere philosophic inquiry; but we must have such a practical apprehension of the subject as shall bring permanent peace and hope to the soul. It is to this aspect of it that we wish now to direct our attention.

We may observe, in the outset, that the Bible is not a book of *theological definitions;* it does not give us the truth in a regular formulated system; it is much more a great store-house of facts and illustrations, and leaves us to make our own definitions and construct our own systems. The nearest that it comes to giving us a definition of faith is Paul's language:

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen."[1] The language of this verse, as we have it in our English translation, is somewhat obscure. Rendered literally from the *German* it reads thus: "But faith is a certain assurance of that for which we hope, and does not doubt of that which we have not seen." And so likewise from the Greek we might render it: "But faith is a firm confidence of things for which we hope, and a sure conviction of things not seen." We hope for, that is we expect and desire, good things yet future —not yet in our possession—for we do not hope for those blessings which we already have: and the only ground of such hope is our faith, our belief, that we shall obtain the things desired, and such belief rests upon sure and satisfactory evidence. And such future good things, for which we hope, may be, and often are, even in worldly matters, things *unseen*. So the farmer sows his seed, and waits in hope. The thing for which he hopes, namely the future harvest, is not only unseen, but does not yet exist. But his faith in the Providence of God and the productiveness of the earth is such a firm confidence that the future harvest will come, that he does not doubt of this thing not yet seen, but casts forth his seed with a joyful heart. It is so in religion. Some things we already possess, and for which we no longer hope; but for others we hope. So pardon of sin, peace with God, and the

[1] Heb. xi. 1.

love of God in our hearts, came to us by faith. When we sought them they were to us yet future, and things "not seen," and not experienced. But we heard of them from God's Word, and hoped for them; that is we desired them, longed and prayed for them, and expected them, and felt sure that we should obtain them, because God, who cannot lie, had promised them: and so, letting go of every other refuge and hope, we took God at his word, cast our souls unreservedly upon Christ alone, and trusted our all to him, and we obtained these great blessings. Our faith was a firm confidence of the things for which we hoped, and a sure conviction and persuasion that they, though not yet seen, should be ours, and it was crowned with victory. We now possess them. And there are still other great blessings promised to us, which are still "things not seen," but faith assures us we shall have them. Among these are the continued protection and guidance of God through life, support and comfort in affliction and death, an entrance into the "Rest that remaineth to the people of God," "the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." These things, with all else that God has promised, we hope for with perfect assurance, and the ground and reason of this hope is our faith in the sure word of a covenant-keeping God. Our hope grows out of our faith, is the child of faith; for where there is no faith, there can be no hope, but despair. Our faith is firm because it rests upon a faithful God, who cannot deceive us. The truth is, we have nothing,

and can have nothing, of the unseen past, present, or future, except by faith. All the facts of history, the existence and condition of affairs in the world beyond our own observation, and all the future, can come to us only by faith. We are perfectly sure that there once lived such men as Julius Cæsar, George Washington, and Napoleon Bonaparte—that there now exists such a city as Pekin in China—that America and its institutions will continue in the future; but we have not seen any of these—it is our faith that is the firm assurance of these unseen realities. It is so in matters of religion. There are many things in its past history—in the very nature of the grand subjects of which it treats—in its present state in the world—and in the promises of its future development, which we have not seen, and cannot fully comprehend. Yet we believe them, because they are grounded upon such evidences as leave us no room to doubt, and as have satisfied the greatest and best men of all lands and ages.

The nature of faith is clearly *two-fold*, usually called *historical* and *evangelical*, a faith of the *intellect*, and a faith of the *heart*. Both are necessary, but the former may exist without the latter, and cannot of itself justify us before God.

What is historical faith? "It is the assent of the understanding to satisfactory evidence;" or it signifies "mere historical belief of the Scriptures." It is right in itself and necessary, and must precede and accompany repentance and salvation, but it cannot

justify the sinner before God, because it does not apprehend and appropriate Christ to himself. It has not necessarily anything saving in it. The Apostle James speaks of it, when he says: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead."[1] This historical faith does not produce good works; it does not "work by love and purify the heart"—does not make the man a "new creature" in Christ Jesus, and is therefore dead. Our Lutheran Symbols are very careful to distinguish between true and saving faith, and mere historical belief, as we have already seen. Let us note well their language: "Such faith is not here spoken of, as even the devils and the ungodly possess, who likewise believe the history, that Christ has suffered and has arisen from the dead; but *true* faith is spoken of—that which believes that we obtain grace and forgiveness of sins through Christ."[2] "It is not faith to have merely a knowledge of histories, but to have confidence in God, and to receive his promises."[3]

The distinguished Dr. Philip J. Spener, that great light of true piety in the Lutheran Church, in his "Explanation of Luther's Smaller Catechism," gives a more full and simple account of what is meant by a historical dead faith. In answer to the question, "What is a historical dead faith?" he says: "When

[1] Jas. ii. 19, 20. [2] Augs. Con. Art. 20. [3] Do.

an individual handles the Bible as he would a mere human production, without divine light and influences, or even though he may regard it as coming from God, receives that Word, from which the articles of our faith are taken, or the doctrines which it teaches, as he would receive any other teachings of men—studies it only with his own natural light and powers—believes it only because other people say it is true, or because from his youth up he has been told so, he can have only a historical or dead faith. It will not make him a new or different man; he will bring forth none of the fruits of a living faith, but will remain the same man that he was before: and yet he hopes, contrary to God's ordinance, to be saved in this manner, having, with such knowledge and belief, no trust or confidence at all in the Redeemer, and feeling no need of him."

Hence we return directly to the question, "*What is justifying or saving faith?*" Perhaps we shall be doing good service by giving Spener's explanation of this also, as contained in the work referred to. He gives it in the form of questions and answers. 1. "What is true saving faith?" "It is the heartfelt confidence of an individual, who, by the aid of the Divine Spirit, knows the truth from God's Word, appropriates to himself its promises, and relies wholly upon the grace and mercy of God in Christ, and here finds and possesses salvation." 2. "What belongs to this faith?" "Three things: *knowledge*, *belief* and *trust*." 3. "What kind of knowledge?" "Not merely

such a knowledge of Scripture facts and doctrines as may be obtained by a careful study of the Bible, and are grasped by our own unaided understanding, but it is that living acquaintance with divine things, with which the Holy Spirit, by his own light, illuminates the souls of those who properly hear the word, and do not resist his influences. Such persons will see and understand those divine truths, which are necessary to their salvation, from the Scriptures themselves, though in the greatest simplicity, yet as really and truly taught of God. So the Bible teaches: "In thy light shall we see light."[1] "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."[2] "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints—and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe."[3] "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."[4] "And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto

[1] Ps. xxxvi. 9. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 6. [3] Eph. i. 17–19. [4] 2 Pet. i. 19.

salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."[1]

4. "What kind of belief is it? Not such assent as we give to the teachings of men, or the dictates of our own unassisted reason; but that wherein we assure ourselves of the truth, because God, who cannot lie, teaches it in his word, and by his Holy Spirit seals it upon our hearts."

5. "What kind of trust or confidence is it? Not such a carnal security as induces a person to imagine that he has salvation in the grace of Christ, while he continues in sin; but it is such an undoubting reliance upon the mercy of God in Christ, as is consistent with the conditions on which pardon is promised to us, and in which the penitent believer appropriates to himself, most certainly, all the blessings of salvation, for Christ's sake, and securely rests therein, infinitely preferring them to all other good in the world."

6. "But is this knowledge, belief, and confidence, *perfect?* No; our knowledge is still but 'in part,' and needs a constant increase; our belief is often assaulted by all kinds of doubts, but is not overcome; and our confidence is often weak, and needs to be constantly strengthened." "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 15–17.

perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."[1]

7. "But is *weak* faith also true and saving? Yes, if it is sincere, and really apprehends Christ, for he is the same Savior to the weak as to the strong." "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."[2] "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."[3]

On a subject of this nature it is important to have clear and concise *definitions*. A number of such have already been given, in our general quotations from our symbolical books, as to the exact nature of saving or justifying faith. To refresh the reader's mind, and bring out the matter strongly and fully, we will repeat some of them. Saving faith then is, "That conviction, that certain, firm, inward confidence, with which, from our hearts, we hold the promises of God as true and certain." Again: "In the promises of the gospel, faith apprehends and appropriates the merits of Christ; for these merits must be applied and imputed to us by faith, if we are to be justified thereby." Again: "Faith is a deliberate living confidence in the grace of God." Further: "It is a divine work in us, which changes and renews us." "There must not be feigned such a faith as can consist with an evil intention to sin and act contrary to conscience."

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 9–10. [2] Matt. xii. 20. [3] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

Let us add the following quotations from Luther: "True faith is not an idle quality or empty husk in the heart, which may be in deadly sin until" (as the Papists maintained) "charity comes and quickens it; but if it be true faith, it is a SURE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE in the heart, and a firm conviction whereby Christ is apprehended." * * "Faith takes hold of Christ, and has him present, and holds him inclosed in the heart, as the ring does the precious stone." Thus far these quotations.

Now let us endeavor to bring before our minds, clearly and fully, the several most important points here presented.

1. We see that justifying faith is both *objective* and *subjective;* that is, it is *belief* of the truth as an objective reality, and it is *trust* in Christ for salvation. We must both BELIEVE and TRUST. Neither is complete, nor can assure us of salvation, without the other. But what are we to believe? 1. We are to believe, in general, *the Word of God*—the doctrines, truths, and facts of Christianity, as they are revealed to us in the Scriptures—not as matters of speculation, but as the undoubted truths of God, upon which the soul can rest its undying hopes of eternal happiness. This is plainly taught in many passages of that Word. Jesus says: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."[1] And Paul tell us: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."[2] Of course this

[1] Mark i. 15. [2] Rom. x. 17.

embraces the whole subject of Christian Doctrines, or Dogmatic Theology, and is beautifully expressed in the German by the word *Glaubenslehre* (Doctrine of Faith). It is no part of our object to discuss these doctrines here, or even to enumerate them: only so far as justifying faith specially and specifically embraces them, shall we refer to them.

2. We are specially to believe in *our Lord Jesus Christ* in order to our justification—in his Divinity, his Messiahship, and in all that he is and has done and suffered for us. It is surprising how frequently, strongly, and clearly the Scriptures set forth this great matter. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." * * "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."[1] Notice especially the following verse: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."[2] Here the whole mighty issue hangs upon believing "on the Son," or not believing "the Son." It is surely not without meaning, that in

[1] John iii. 14–18. [2] John iii. 36.

this one short verse we have "the Son" mentioned twice in such a connection. Look at the grand and solemn *antithesis*. Faith "on the Son," and "everlasting life," and a want of faith on "the Son," and eternal death! And the present tense is used; it is not *shall* have, but "*hath* everlasting life"—hath it NOW: and where there is no faith, the poor sinner not only "shall not see life," "but the wrath of God *abideth* on him!" This "wrath" is upon the unbeliever *now*, and it "abideth on him." No general faith in God and the Scriptures is sufficient here. A man may believe much—in fact, may believe everything that is right and good; but if he does not believe "on the Son," there is no life or salvation for him. And so, on the other hand, his faith may be defective, or even erroneous in many things, yet if he truly believe "on the Son," as best he knows him, "he hath everlasting life."

And the reason why we are thus shut up to the necessity of believing on Christ is also given, plainly enough, in the Scriptures. God has given but one Savior, and provided but one way of salvation, and hence there is and can be no other. Hear the divine word: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."[1] "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of

[1] Acts iv. 12.

sins."[1] "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time."[2] There is but one of whom it is said: "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."[3] But one to whom we are directed to look as the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."[4] Only one "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,"[5] and "whose blood cleanseth us from all sin."[6] One only who took our place, and "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,"[7] redeeming us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."[8]

According to these and many similar passages of God's word, and the teaching of the Church, it is clear that this faith in Christ, *objectively* considered, is, that we are to believe that our sins were laid upon him—that he suffered and died for us, and has made a full and perfect atonement for all men—that he arose for us from the dead, and intercedes for us in heaven—that he has "purchased for us the favor of God, the gracious influence of the Holy Ghost, and eternal salvation,"[9] having "redeemed us from all iniquity, from death, and from the power of the devil."[10] That Christ

[1] Acts x. 43. [2] 1 Tim. ii. 5–6. [3] Is. liii. 5. [4] John i. 29. [5] Eph. i. 7. [6] 1 John i. 7. [7] 1 Pet. ii. 24. [8] Gal. iii. 13. [9] Catechism, p. 30. [10] Catechism.

suffered for us, and that sins are remitted unto us for Christ's sake, and righteousness and eternal life are bestowed upon us."[1]

3. It is another part of this objective faith that we are to believe in "*the forgiveness of sin.*" In the Apostles' Creed we profess to believe in "the forgiveness of sins," which Luther explains in these words: "In which Christian Church he (Christ) daily and richly forgives me, and all other believers, all our sins."[2] One of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer is: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;" of which Luther says: "We pray in this petition that our heavenly Father would not regard our sins, nor deny us our requests on account of them; for we merit not one single good thing at his hands; but that, though we very often and greatly offend and deserve severe chastisement, he would of his free grace pardon us and bestow upon us what we desire."[3] Now faith believes that this petition is heard and answered, and that our sins are forgiven—that to the true believer they are *all* forgiven—are *now* forgiven. So teach the Scriptures abundantly: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."[4] "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."[5] "And that repentance and

[1] Augs. Con. Art. IV. [2] Catechism, p. 12. [3] Catechism, p. 15. [4] Ps. ciii. 12. [5] Is. i. 18.

remission of sins should be preached in his (Jesus') name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."[1] "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him, all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."[2] And as soon as we truly and sincerely lay hold of this great and blessed truth, "we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,"[3] and understand the full force of the Apostle's declaration: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."[4]

4. This faith is of an *individual* character. One person cannot believe for another; not the parent for the child, or the child for the parent, but "Each one believes for himself, that Christ is given for him."[5] It is indeed true that Christ has made atonement for the sins of all men—that he is "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world," but it does me no good unless he also takes away *my* sins as an individual. I must therefore lay hold upon him myself, and by faith appropriate his merits to my own person. Luther, in his explanation of the second article of the Apostles' Creed, presents this matter in the following very striking and beautiful manner: "*I* believe that Jesus Christ, true God begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man born of the Virgin Mary,

[1] Luke xxiv. 47. [2] Acts xiii. 38, 39. [3] Rom. v. 1. [4] Rom. viii. 1. [5] Apology.

is MY Lord; who hath redeemed, purchased, and delivered ME, a poor, forlorn, condemned person, from sin, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood, and with his innocent sufferings and death; in order that *I* might be his, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and happiness; even as he is risen from the dead, and now lives and reigns to all eternity."

5. *But what is the ground on which this faith, objectively, rests?* Not anything that we have *done*, or *experienced*, or *felt*, or *imagined*, or *dreamed*, or that *others have told us:* but *true faith rests upon the infallible certainty of the divine promises.*

We have already seen abundantly that our faith cannot rest upon our own works or merits, otherwise we could be our own saviors, and would have no need of Christ. Our best efforts are necessarily imperfect, and cannot fulfill the demands of God's most holy law.

It has been very common for persons to rest their faith upon what they have *experienced* and *felt*, or even dreamed, or the reveries of an excited imagination! They *believe* that their sins are forgiven, and that they are children of God, and they hope to be saved, because, at a certain time, which they can name, they have been greatly excited on the subject of religion. They felt that they were lost sinners, mourned and wept and sought the Lord—they attended meetings, asked the prayers of the Church,

came to the "mourners' bench," or went through some other such process—then, after awhile, they obtained relief, their burden was rolled off their souls, and they had peace—their tears were wiped away, and they *felt* good, and could even rejoice. Others gathered around them, rejoiced with them, and told them they were converted to God. About the same time they had a remarkable dream, or saw some kind of a vision by day or by night, and therefore they believe themselves to be in a state of grace. And they have felt good many a time since, especially in meetings, and this is evidence enough to them that they are not mistaken.

Now, the experience here described *may* all be true and real, and there *may* have been real conversion to God: but to be faithful to God and the souls of men, and to our own souls, in regard to so vital a matter, we are compelled to sift the subject more closely. Is there not immense room here for *self-deception*—great and terrible self-deception? Are not our *feelings* the most uncertain thing in the world upon which to rely? Do they not change constantly with the state of our health, the state of the weather, and of our circumstances? Dare we, then, trust our feelings alone? What warrant have we for this in the Word of God? Certainly none at all. Is it not notorious that thousands, and even tens and hundreds of thousands, have professed conversion in times of great religious excitement, who afterwards fell away, and gave abundant evidence that

they knew nothing about true religion? They depended wholly upon their feelings—these changed and passed away, and their religion was gone! It was purely *emotional*, and therefore "as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away."[1] And what now is the condition of such persons? Certainly, in most cases, "the last state of that man is worse than the first."[2] Many conclude that as they were deceived, having had only sand for a foundation, there is nothing in religion, and that all Christians are either deceived as they were, or they are hypocrites. Some become open infidels and scoffers.

When a man grounds his faith on his feelings, tears, prayers, or any "bodily exercise" through which he has gone, does he not really do the same thing that the Roman Catholic does, who depends for salvation upon the confessions which he has made to a priest, or the penance imposed, or the external use of the sacraments of the Church?

Upon what then is our faith to be grounded? Clearly, as already stated, upon the unfailing promises of God's Word. "It has confidence in God, and receives his promises."[3] "It is that conviction, that certain, firm, inward confidence, with which from our hearts, we hold the promise of God as certain and true."[4] "Therefore, whenever we speak of that faith which justifies, these three subjects present themselves together: first, the divine promises; secondly, that

[1] Hos. vi. 4. [2] Mat. xii. 45. [3] Augs. Con., Art. XX. [4] Apology.

these offer to us grace freely and without our merit; thirdly, that the blood of Christ and his merits are the treasure from which recompense is made for our sins."[1] "In the *promises of the gospel*, faith apprehends and appropriates the merits of Christ."[2] We are sure that we, poor, lost, guilty sinners, dare come to Christ to obtain pardon and salvation, only because he himself declares that he has opened the way, and because he invites us to come. We accept the invitation and believe the promise, and here our faith rests. "We believe, teach, and confess that poor sinful man is justified before God, that is, is absolved, declared freed and delivered from all his sins, and from the richly merited sentence of condemnation, and is received to sonship with God and inheritance of everlasting life, without any of our merit or worthiness—also without all past, present, or future good works, out of pure grace, alone because of the merits, the entire obedience, the bitter sufferings, the death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose obedience is imputed to us for righteousness. These blessings are set before us by the Holy Spirit in the promises of the gospel, and faith is the only means by which we lay hold upon them, accept them, apply and appropriate them to ourselves."[3]

To *apprehend* Christ, and *appropriate* his merits to ourselves, is to lay hold upon him by faith, and accept him as our own, with all the blessings of his

[1] Apology, p. 78. [2] Concordia. [3] Concordia (German), p. 276.

redemption, as he is offered to us in the promises of the gospel. He stands before us with open arms, and says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;"[1] and faith answers, "I come, dear Lord," and rushes into his arms, and leans upon his bosom. Jesus stands by the waters of life, and cries: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink:"[2] and faith stretches forth the hand, and says: "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord,"[3] and freely drinks. Before the hungry and starving, the Master spreads the table with all the rich blessings of his redemption, and invites them to come and eat "without money and without price," and faith approaches and eats "the bread of life." Thus the soul rests upon the promises of Christ, and is made a partaker of him.

2. FAITH SUBJECTIVE. This brings into view that other characteristic of justifying faith usually called TRUST in Christ, confidence in him, reliance upon him, giving him our hearts, clinging to him, and other such-like expressions. It is similar to the trust and confidence which one dear friend has in another, only more full and complete, as we are *sure* that Jesus can not lie or deceive, and that he never can fail us. As the sick man, prostrate and helpless upon his bed of suffering, feeling that he can do nothing at all for himself, gives himself up entirely into the hands of

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[1] Matt. xi. 28. [2] John vii. 37. [3] Ps. cxvi. 13.

the physician in whom he has confidence, so the sin-sick soul, utterly despairing of self, of all efforts, merits and righteousness of his own, abandons every other refuge and hope, and rests simply on Christ, and is healed and blessed. As the child sweetly reposes on the bosom of its mother, feeling perfectly secure even if the house should be on fire, so the true believer confidently relies upon the almighty Savior, in life and death, for time and eternity.

This faith has in it the three following elements: 1. That we feel our *need* of Christ. 2. That we are convinced that he is *able* and *willing* to save us. 3. That, with such views and feelings, we implicitly *rely* upon him alone for salvation. No man will apply to another for help, nor the sinner to Christ, as long as he is not conscious that he needs help, or believes that he is fully able to help himself. The sick man does not call for a physician as long as he does not feel that he is sick, or thinks he can cure himself. Nor will he go to the physician in whose skill and ability he has no confidence. So likewise there can be no such thing as justifying faith, until there is what, perhaps, we might call *the proper conditions* of faith. The best of seed, put into the ground in the winter, will not vegetate or come up, because the earth is too cold; nor when the earth is too wet or too dry: there must be the proper *conditions* in order that it may sprout and grow. So true faith will not spring up in the heart that is cold and dead in sin. There must be first the proper conditions of faith.

There must be knowledge of sin, sorrow for sin, confession of sin, and an earnest desire for pardon and delivery from its guilt and power—a determination to forsake it and lead a new life: these must precede and accompany justifying faith, as in the main, its proper conditions, without which it cannot take place. Hence Luther says: "First, a man must be taught by the law to know himself, so that he may learn to say with the Apostle, 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;'[1] and with the Psalmist, 'They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.'[2] 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight.'[3] Now," continues Luther, "when a man is humbled by the law, and brought to the knowledge of himself, then follows true repentance, for true repentance begins at the fear of God and judgment, and he sees himself to be so great a sinner, that he can find no means of deliverance from his guilt and danger, in his own strength, works, or merits."[4] * * "Here now he begins to sigh and to cry out in his distress: who can give succor? For he, being thus terrified with the law, utterly despairs of his own strength: he looks around and sighs for the help of a Mediator and Savior. Here then comes, in good time, the healthful word of the gospel, and says: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee."[5] Believe in Jesus Christ crucified for thy sins. If thou feel thy sins, and the

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[1] Rom. iii. 23. [2] Ps. xiv 3. [3] Ps. li. iv. [4] Com. Gal. [5] Mat. ix. 2.

burden thereof, look not upon them in thyself, but remember that they are taken from thee, and laid upon Jesus, "by whose stripes thou art healed."[1]

Now, when you know that you are condemned by the pure and perfect law of God, and utterly unable to save yourself, and that God, in his great mercy, has given "his only begotten Son" to save you, and, with a "broken and contrite heart," you are willing to accept him as he is offered to you, then also you are ready to cast yourself upon him by faith. And "being justified by faith, you have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."[2]

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[1] Luther on the Galatians. [2] Rom. v. i.

CHAPTER V.

HOW THIS FAITH IS OBTAINED.

"FOR the attainment of such Faith, God has instituted the ministry, and given the Gospel and sacraments, by which, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith where, and when he will, in those who hear the Gospel, which teaches, that through the merits of Christ, and not through our own merits, we have a merciful God, if we believe these things."[1]

This article of the Augsburg Confession contains a brief but clear statement of what the Reformers held on this somewhat difficult subject. Let us now take it up, and endeavor to analyze and explain it.

1. And our first remark is, that a *particular kind* of faith is referred to. "*Such* faith;" that is, such as justifies us before God, which we have already described at some length. There is a very close connection between the subjects in the *fourth*, *fifth*, and *sixth* articles of the Confession; and as the doctrine of Justification had been specifically presented in the fourth, the manner and means of obtaining that faith

[1] Augs. Conf., Art. V.

which justifies are now stated in the fifth. The question, then, of this chapter is narrowed down to the single point of *how justifying faith is obtained.*

2. It is clear that it must be *obtained.* We do not possess this faith by nature. We are not born with it, nor can we inherit it from others. It is not to be bought, or merited, or procured for us; but must be produced within us. We are in a world and state of unbelief. This is abundantly evident both from experience and the testimony of God's Word. "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."[1] "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."[2] "Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed."[3] "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee."[4] This is, indeed, a sad picture of our fallen humanity which the pencil of inspiration has here painted, but it is no less true than sad. A world without the *knowledge* of God, and without faith in him. Wherever, therefore, this saving faith exists, it is as much a new production as would be the creation of a world.

3. We remark further, that it is *not a production of our own unaided powers.* In Luther's explanation of the third article of the Creed we have the following language: "I believe that I cannot, merely by my own reason, or other natural powers, believe in or come to

[1] Rom. xi. 32. [2] Rom. iii. 10–11. [3] Is. liii. 1. [4] John xvii. 25.

Jesus Christ my Lord."[1] In the Eighteenth Article of the Augsburg Confession it is said: "Concerning free will, it is taught that to some extent man has freedom of will to live an externally moral life, and to choose between those things which reason comprehends; but without grace, assistance, and the operation of the Holy Spirit, he is unable to become pleasing to God, heartily to fear God, or to believe, or to purge his heart of its inborn evil lusts; but these things are effected by the Holy Ghost, who is given through the Word of God." So St. Paul declares: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."[2] Says Melancthon in the Apology: "What is the difference between the Pelagians and our adversaries (the Catholics)? as they both teach that man, unaided by the Holy Spirit, can love God, keep his commandments, *quoad substantiam actuum;* that is, they presume to be able to do the works by the power of natural reason, without the agency of the Holy Ghost, thereby to merit the grace of God."[3] Hence, the authors of the Form of Concord say: "We reject the gross error of the Pelagians, who taught that man is able by his own powers, without the grace of the Holy Spirit, to convert himself to God, to believe the Gospel, to obey the law of God with his heart, and thus to merit forgiveness of sins and eter-

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[1] Catechism. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 14. [3] Form of Con., p. 200.

nal life."[1] I will quote portions of the argument of these men (the authors of the Form of Concord), on the subject of *Man's Inability*, which is both clear and strong: "In the first place, human reason, or the natural understanding of man, though he still may have an obscure spark of the knowledge of the existence of God, as also of the doctrine of the law (Rom. i. 19), is still so ignorant, blind, and perverted, that, even when the most talented and learned persons on earth read or hear the Gospel of the Son of God, and the promise of everlasting salvation, they are nevertheless unable, by their own powers, to comprehend, or understand, or believe it, or grasp it as the truth. 'For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.'[2] 'And the light shineth in darkness' (that is in this dark, blind world, which neither knows nor regards God), 'and the darkness comprehended it not.'[3]

"Again, the Scriptures teach that man is not only weak, sick, and blind, but entirely inanimate and 'dead in trespasses and sins.'[4] Now, as a man, who is physically dead, cannot, by his own powers, fit and prepare himself to obtain temporal life again, so a man who is spiritually dead in sin cannot, by his own powers, prepare for or direct himself to the attainment of spiritual and heavenly righteousness and life, if he is not delivered from the death of sin and made alive by the Son of God.

[1] Form of Con., p. 471. [2] 1 Cor. i. 21. [3] John i. 5. [4] Eph. ii. 1.

"Therefore the Scripture, in spiritual matters, excludes from the understanding, heart and will of the natural man, every aptitude, capacity, faculty, and power to think, understand, know, begin, will, propose, do, undertake, or co-operate in any thing good and right in and of himself." Meaning of course without divine aid. Without such aid, nothing—with such aid, every thing. So teach the Scriptures in such passages as the following: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."[1] "They are together become unprofitable."[2] "My Word hath no place in you."[3] Nor is this all. "The Word of God," say these men, "testifies, that in divine things, the understanding, heart, and will, of natural unregenerate man, are not only wholly and entirely alienated from God, but *opposed* to him and inclined to all evil." "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."[4] "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it."[5] "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."[6]

Of course by all this is not meant that man has no agency in this matter of attaining unto true faith, or that he is a mere machine in the hands of the Holy Spirit, acting only as he is acted upon, and moving only in the direction in the which he is moved, and as

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[1] 2 Cor. iii. 5. [2] Rom. iii. 12. [3] John viii. 37. [4] Gen. viii. 21. [5] Jer. xvii. 9. [6] Rom. viii. 7.

far as he is moved. By no means. It means only that if left to himself he never could or would come to true faith or recover himself. That this is not so will appear from the following considerations.

First, from the fact *that he may resist the Holy Spirit, and is represented as guilty in doing so.* "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."[1] "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh."[2] Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."[3] "Quench not the Spirit."[4] "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."[5] "But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them."[6] "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate."[7] If then, as we here see, men can "resist the Holy Ghost," "resist the truth," "quench the Spirit," "grieve the Holy Spirit of God," "stone and kill the prophets," and reject and crucify Christ himself, it is clear, that they have at least so much of an agency in this matter, as to be able to *refuse* and

[1] Acts vii. 51. [2] Gen. vi. 3. [3] 2 Tim. iii. 8. [4] 1 Thess. v. 19. [5] Eph. iv. 30. [6] Is. lviii. 10. [7] Matt. xxiii 37–38.

reject God's offers of mercy and salvation. They are not compelled to the exercise of faith and the acceptance of Christ. The Holy Spirit cannot, and does not "work faith" in their hearts against their will. In resisting his influences, they are therefore guilty of the fearful sin of their own destruction.

But the fact that men may *refuse* and *reject*, implies, by an absolute necessity, that they may also do the contrary of this, that is, ACCEPT and RECEIVE. As they can "resist the Holy Spirit," and thus prevent him from working faith in their hearts, so, it is clear, they can also receive him, listen to his voice, use the means of grace, and yield themselves to his control. The one act necessarily implies the other. And when men hear and receive the Word of God, and do not resist the Holy Spirit, who always accompanies that Word, he will, in every case, and in his "own time and place," work faith in their hearts. "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."[1] Hence men are *commanded* to believe, and their faith is made the condition of their salvation. "Repent ye and believe the gospel."[2] "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[3] "And this is his commandment: that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ."[4] "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house."[5] "He that be-

[1] Rev. iii. 20. [2] Mark i. 15. [3] Matt. iii. 2. [4] 1 John iii. 23. [5] Acts xvi. 31.

lieveth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."[1] What then does the Confession mean when it declares that "the Holy Spirit works faith in those who hear the gospel *where* and *when* he will?" We answer that this is designed to express, in the first place, man's utter inability to save himself, or obtain saving faith without divine aid, as we have already seen. God is not bound to man, but man to God. God can do as he pleases, but man must come to God's time and measures. And as man cannot believe without divine aid, so he must accept that aid "*where*" it is offered, namely in the Word of God and the ordinances of his church; and also "*when*" it is offered; that is, when that Word and those ordinances are brought to him. He cannot neglect or refuse to hear the Gospel and to use prayer and the sacraments in God's time, and yet hope that whenever he chooses God's Spirit and grace must be at his service, and that in his own way, time, and need, he can ask, and that the Holy Spirit must work faith in him and regenerate his soul. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found," is the language of God's Word; "call ye upon him while he is near,"[2] implying that there is a time when the Lord is not near, and when he cannot be found by neglecters and despisers. "Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would

[1] Mark xvi. 16. [2] Is. lv. 6.

none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."[1]

"Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation."[2]

In regard to the *connection* between the divine and human agency, in the production of faith, the facts seem to be the following: If left to himself man never could, nor would, believe unto salvation; and yet in the attainment of justifying faith, as in the entire work of his renewal and sanctification, God makes him, in an important sense, *a co-worker* with himself. He is not passive, but active to the utmost extent of his powers. God does not act upon him as if he were a block or a stone, but treats him as a rational, intelligent, and responsible agent. He communicates

[1] Prov. i. 24–31. [2] Heb. ii. 1–3.

to him knowledge; addresses his understanding and reason, and seeks to influence and move his conscience and will by motives and arguments. Man never takes the *initiative*—never moves towards God, until God first moves towards him; but then he must not only not resist and reject what God offers, but receive and use it. God GIVES all the time, and man must RECEIVE and act upon that which he receives. He possesses understanding, reason, and will, and he must use these powers, given him by his Maker, in divine as in human affairs, not as independent of God and without his aid, but with the divine aid furnished him.

4. Justifying Faith then is *the work of the Holy Spirit.* We have seen that man is a condemned sinner, under the curse of the violated law, ignorant of himself as well as of God and spiritual things, and in hopeless misery and ruin. God, out of pure love, has determined to restore him. For this purpose he has given his "only begotten Son" to suffer and die for him. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."[1] But in order that man may become a partaker of this great salvation, he must have true and saving faith, for by it alone, can he apprehend or take hold of Christ as his own Savior. But by nature he does not have this faith, nor can he obtain it by his own unaided efforts. How then is he to obtain it? This is a great and most vital question, and what is the answer?

[1] Gal. iii. 13.

The answer has already been given; but we are now prepared to bring it to a more direct and full examination and analysis: "For the purpose of obtaining this faith, God has instituted the ministry, and given the gospel and sacraments, by which, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who, when and where he will, works faith in those that hear the gospel." Now let us see what are the facts here stated. They are, first, *that faith is the work of the Holy Spirit.* Secondly, *that the Holy Spirit is obtained by means of the preached gospel and administration of the sacraments;* and, thirdly, *that faith is produced in those that hear the gospel.* Let us examine these several points with the care which their great importance demands.

As to the first, that faith is the direct work of the Holy Spirit, we remark that this is the plain and obvious teaching of the Word of God. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that, not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."[1] "And no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."[2] "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior."[3] "And a certain woman, named Lydia, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."[4] "For it is God which worketh in you both

[1] Eph. ii. 8. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 3. [3] Titus iii. 5–6. [4] Acts xvi. 14.

to will and to do of his good pleasure."[1] "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes."[2] And Jesus himself says: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." * * "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."[3]

And with this clear testimony of the divine Word the teaching of our Church is in perfect agreement. "Faith," says Luther, "is a divine work in us, which changes and regenerates us."[4] "I believe that the Holy Ghost has called me by the gospel, enlightened me by his gifts, sanctified and preserved me in the true faith, in like manner as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ."[5] "For neither I nor you could ever know anything of Christ, or believe in him, and approach the Lord, if it were not offered and freely given to us through the preaching of the gospel by the Holy Ghost, through whom this work is performed and accomplished; for Christ gained and obtained this treasure by his sufferings, death, and resurrection. But if it should remain in obscurity, unknown to any one, it would be vain and utterly lost. But in order that

[1] Phil. ii. 13. [2] Ez. xi. 19. [3] John xiv. 26, and xvi. 8. [4] Preface to the Romans. [5] Creed, Art. III.

this treasure might not remain in obscurity, but that it might be applied and enjoyed, God sent forth his Word to be preached and revealed to all; in which Word the Holy Ghost is given to bring home unto us this treasure and redemption, and to appropriate them to us."[1] "For the hearts which are without the Holy Ghost, are without the fear of God, without faith, without confidence, do not believe that God hears them, or that he forgives their sins, or assists them in time of need: for this reason they are ungodly."[2] "Faith is the gift of God; because it is he who calls, enlightens, and convicts us, and enables us to repent of our sins; without any one of which previous steps, justifying faith is impossible; because he affords us that knowledge of his own character, and the plan of salvation, in view of which alone we can confide in him: and because, at this, as well as every other stage of our progressive moral improvement, he never fails to superadd the blessing of his Spirit to the faithful use of the means of grace."[3] It is clear that the work to be wrought WITHIN man, in his redemption, is as important and necessary, as that which has been wrought FOR him. Christ has wrought out salvation for him, and the Holy Spirit must work faith, regeneration, and sanctification within him. Christ has fulfilled the law in his stead, yielded the obedience which it required even unto death, and which man could not render, suffered its

[1] Larger Catechism, Creed, Art. III. [2] Apology, p. 201. [3] Dr. S. S. Schmucker, Pop. Theol., p. 161.

penalty for him, and thus made an atonement for the sins of all men, that "God might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."[1] But the blessed work of redemption must also be *applied to man*, and so applied that his moral nature shall be renovated and restored to God and holiness. His heart, which, by the fall and sin, was "alienated from God to the devil," must be torn loose from the hold which Satan has upon it, purged of its evil passions and lusts, and be brought back to God. His ignorance must be removed and divine light shed into the soul. He, who is "dead in trespasses and sins," must be "quickened," and raised to new spiritual life. He must be "born again," "renewed in the spirit of his mind;" he must become a "new creature," "old things having passed away, and all things having become new." All this, and much more—indeed everything that pertains to man's enlightenment, his conviction of sin and conversion to God—his regeneration and sanctification, his growth in grace and preparation for heaven, is the work of the Holy Spirit—is a work wrought within man, when and where true faith is produced.

But how is the Holy Spirit obtained? This is the second point. And if we cannot have true faith before we have the Spirit, nor without his powerful agency, then it becomes a question of the very first importance, How can we obtain the Holy Spirit?

[1] Rom. iii. 26.

We answer, the Spirit is the GIFT of God! We must never forget that Christ and redemption, the gospel and sacraments, and all the means of grace, and so also the Holy Spirit, are the free and merciful gifts of God They are all parts of the one great plan of salvation, and all of grace. "By grace are ye saved." So he came to the saints and prophets of old as a *gift:* "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."[1] So he was promised to the New Testament Church as a gift: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit."[2] Christ promised him as a gift: "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."[3] "And being assembled together with them (the disciples), he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence."[4] So he came upon the disciples on the day of Pente-

[1] 1 Pet. i. 21. [2] Joel ii. 28–29. [3] John xvi. 7. [4] Acts i. 4–5.

cost as a gift: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. * * And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."[1] And Peter told the anxious souls on the day of Pentecost plainly on what conditions they should receive this gracious gift: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."[2]

But how and under what conditions is the Holy Spirit given?

We have seen, first, that he is given as a part of God's great remedial agency for the salvation of the world. His operations are therefore never separated from Christ and his redemption work—the church and means of grace—but always manifested therewith. We cannot therefore reject Christ and his ordinances and still hope for the influences of the Divine Spirit. Hence the authors of the Form of Concord say: "We reject and condemn the error of the enthusiasts, who imagine that God draws men to himself, enlightens, justifies, and saves them without means, without the hearing of the Word of God, and without the use of the sacraments."[3] In all ages and among all nations, heathen as well as Christian, there have been false pretenders of divine spiritual influ-

[1] Acts ii. 2, 4. [2] Acts ii. 38. [3] Form of Con., p. 472.

ences—false Christs, false prophets and priests, and false religionists. It was so in the days of Christ and the Apostles. Our Savior warns us against them when he says: "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."[1] And the Apostle John says: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. And this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."[2] Hence the importance of the statement *that the Holy Spirit is not given without the use of the means of grace, but through those means.* "God has instituted the Ministry, and given the Gospel and Sacraments, by which, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith in those who hear the Gospel." Here let us note well the following points: 1. That it is through the *ministry* in the preaching of the ever blessed gospel, and not through some fanatical means of human device, that the Holy Spirit is given. God always has honored, and always will honor, his own means, which cannot be lightly esteemed or set aside. How vast the importance of

[1] Matt. xxiv. 4, 5. [2] 1 John iv. 1–3.

the command: "Go ye into all the world, and PREACH the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned!"[1] "And that repentance and remission of sins SHOULD BE PREACHED in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."[2] And the Holy Spirit must always accompany the faithful preaching of the pure gospel, because it is his own voice and message—it is the Spirit calling and speaking to men to turn and live. The Spirit inspired men, the prophets and apostles, to write the Word of God, and the minister is only the instrument, by whom the Holy Ghost speaks. "The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."[3] "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."[4] There are indeed other ways by which the truth of God is brought into contact with the hearts and consciences of men, as by the written page and private instruction, and this also is a kind of preaching, or proclaiming of the Word, accompanied by the Spirit, and owned of God; but for obvious reasons the Savior has given the preference to the *living voice*.

The second point to be noted is that the *sacraments* of baptism and the Lord's supper are also means by which God "gives the Holy Spirit." This must be so, if they are of divine appointment, and of any real

[1] Mark xvi. 15, 16. [2] Luke xxiv. 47. [3] Eph. vi. 17. [4] 2 Cor. v. 20.

use at all. They are not grace in themselves, and do not act *ex opere operato*, or by any power of their own; but they are *means* of grace—means by which God's Spirit is obtained and acts. Not in themselves an end, but means to an end. Just, therefore, as we cannot claim, that God shall give us his Holy Spirit, and shall call, enlighten, regenerate and save us, without his Word and gospel; so we cannot demand that it shall be done, or assert that it is done, without the use of those divine ordinances which he has established in his Church. When the Israelites, bitten by the fiery serpents in the wilderness, were to be healed, God said to Moses: "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived."[1] Now, as that piece of brass could have no healing virtue in itself, nor the looking to it save a dying man, the unbelieving might have said, "It is of no use, we will not look." But God did heal the dying by *this means*, and not without it. And he does so still by the means of his own appointment, and not without them.

Thirdly, *prayer* is a means of obtaining the Holy Spirit. This is plainly taught in the Scriptures. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto

[1] Num. xxi. 9.

your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."[1] During the ten days that intervened, between the ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, we are told that the disciples, numbering "about an hundred and twenty," "went up into an upper room," in Jerusalem, and "these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren,"[2] and seem to have been so engaged at the moment when the Spirit was actually and wonderfully poured out upon them.

Fourthly, the Holy Spirit is given, under his grand and glorious New Testament dispensation, as one of the *ascension gifts* of Christ, and at *his intercession*. It was indeed the same Spirit who was present in the Old Testament Church, inspiring the Prophets, and calling, renewing, sanctifying, and guiding the saints of old; yet, as that dispensation was less perfect than the New, and preparatory to it, so his more full manifestation was made only after the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Hence Jesus himself tells his disciples: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."[3] And Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, says: "This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right

[1] Luke xi. 13. [2] Acts i. 13, 14. [3] John xvi. 7.

hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."[1] And in regard to Christ's intercession for the Spirit in our behalf, he himself says: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."[2] "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."[3]

But how and in whom does the Holy Spirit work faith? This question has already been, in part, answered, incidentally, but requires some further elucidation. The short reply is *that he works faith through the means of grace, and in those who faithfully and honestly use those means.* As he is not given without means, so he does not work without means. The Confession says he "works faith in those who hear the gospel," and so teach the Scriptures: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."[4] "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."[5] "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the

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[1] Acts ii. 32, 33. [2] John xiv. 16, 17. [3] John xv. 26. [4] Rom. x. 17. [5] Eph. vi. 17.

joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."[1] A sharp sword is a mighty weapon, and can be made to do great execution; and yet without the living arm to wield it, it is both harmless and useless. So the Word of God is the Spirit's sword, and has its great effect upon the hearts of men in his hand only—then only does it become thus "quick," "powerful," "sharp," "piercing," and a "divider" and "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It was when Lydia *heard* Paul preach that the Lord opened her heart, and then also she "ATTENDED unto the things which were spoken" of him. It was while Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, that the people were pierced "in their heart," and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"[2] And "they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."[3] It was when Philip had instructed the Ethiopian eunuch out of the Scriptures, "and preached unto him Jesus," that he said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," and at his own request was baptized by the Apostle. While Peter was preaching to the congregation, assembled in the house of Cornelius the centurion, while he "yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word,"[4] and they were baptized in the name of the Lord.

Let us look at this subject as it is presented to us

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[1] Heb. iv. 12. [2] Acts ii. 37. [3] Acts ii. 41. [4] Acts x. 44.

in the "Parable of the Sower"[1] by the Savior himself. As a "sower went forth to sow, some seeds fell by the way-side," "some on stony ground," "some among thorns," and only a part "fell on good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold." All the rest brought forth "no fruit to perfection." The difference was altogether in the *ground*, as the seed, the sower, the rain and sunshine were the same in all the cases. The seed was pure and good, having in it the germ of life and the future crop as it fell on all the different kinds of soil. The sower did not scatter chaff, or "tares," or rotten seed on some places, and good seed on others; but the same good seed on all. Now as the Savior himself explains this parable, we cannot be in doubt as to its meaning and application. He tells us positively, "*The seed is the word of God;*" and it is by this "word and the sacraments, as through means, that God gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, where and when he will, in those who hear the gospel." The Word and ordinances then do not, of themselves, produce this faith, though they have a divine adaptation to this end; but the Holy Spirit makes these means effectual, and "works faith" by them, as the sun, air, and rain causes the seed, that is cast into the ground, to sprout and grow up to the full and perfect harvest. But, it may be asked, does the Holy Spirit *always* accompany God's Word and

[1] Matt. xiii. 1–23.

ordinances to all hearts with equal faithfulness, life, and power? Does the sun, and air, and rain come to all the seed on all the different kinds of ground alike? This must be answered in the affirmative as undoubtedly the teaching of the parable. So the Holy Spirit comes to all alike, and acts upon all hearts alike as far as he is *permitted* to do so. But, as we have seen heretofore, he may be *resisted* at the beginning and every stage of his work. Though the sun, air, and rain, were the same upon the seed on "the way-side," "the stony places," and "among the thorns," as upon that on "the good ground," they were prevented from producing the same effect by the hardness of the way-side, the want of soil upon the rock, and the smothering influence of the thorns that "sprung up." Do we then inquire further why faith is produced in some hearts, who hear the gospel, and not in others? —the Savior furnishes the answer in this parable. "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." This is the language of Luke; Matthew has it somewhat different: "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the Word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty." Mark says, "Such as hear the Word and *receive* it." Here then we have the following facts in regard to those in whose hearts the Word becomes fruitful. 1. *They all hear the Word.* "The

seed is the Word of God," and there can be no harvest where the seed is not sown, and no faith where the Word of God is not heard. The hearer does not make that Word, or bring it down from heaven, any more than the ground does the seed. It is the gift of God to him. God *might* give us a harvest without any of our plowing, sowing, or reaping, feeding us as he does the fowls of heaven. "Behold the fowls of the air," says Jesus: "for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them."[1] But though we are "much better" than the fowls, he does not thus feed us. And so he uses means for the production of faith in men's hearts. He sends them the gospel and the means of grace, and with them the Holy Spirit, and so "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." But is man then entirely *passive* in this matter, having nothing to do? Most certainly not. He has much to do with the hearing of the Word, as well as the state of mind with which he hears. He may refuse to hear it—refuse to come to a place where it can be heard, or shut his ears and harden his heart against it. "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear,"[2] says Christ. "Take heed *what* ye hear,"[3] and "Take heed therefore *how* ye hear."[4] It may be laid down as a rule, *that God never does for a man, either in temporal or spiritual matters, what he can do for himself. Our heavenly Father not only recogni-*

[1] Matt. vi. 26. [2] Matt. xiii. 9. [3] Mark iv. 24. [4] Luke viii. 18.

zes the powers which he has given us, but requires us to use them, and to use them properly. He does not *hear for us*, but sends us the gospel, and requires us to hear, receive, choose and act for ourselves. We must go where we can hear the Word of God, where the gospel is preached, give proper attention to it, and receive it. 2. *They understand it.* The good ground hearers understand the Word, according to the parable. The only way by which instruction, thoughts, ideas, knowledge, can be conveyed to the mind of man is through the understanding. Only that part of the divine Word which the understanding *comprehends* and takes up is a real Word of God and a life-giving power to us. All the rest is lost. God has given us understanding, and we are bound to use it—bound to make special and earnest efforts to comprehend the truth communicated to us in the gospel; not independently of God and his Spirit, but by the aid which he offers us. Through the eye and the ear the truth is communicated to the understanding in a language which we can comprehend, and thus we are to learn to know ourselves, to know God, Christ, the law and the gospel, sin and holiness, life and salvation. The good seed of the word falls upon the soil of the understanding, where it must find a lodgment and be taken up. 3. *They receive it.* They do not refuse or reject it—do not resist the truth, or the Spirit by which it is applied, but welcome both, and submit themselves to their influence and control. 4. The good ground hearers receive the word into "*an*

honest and good heart." These are two important qualifications for the proper reception of truth of any kind. "Honest," that is upright, sincere, well disposed to receive the truth in the love of it—not deceitful, not filled with pride, prejudice, and self-importance. "Good," a heart susceptible to impressions tender and humble, not so hardened by sin and filled with error and enmity against God, as necessarily to resist and reject his Spirit and Word; but open to conviction and ready to yield to divine influences. 5. *They keep it.* As the good seed is cast, not simply on the surface of that ground denominated "good," but being loose and mellow, sinks into its bosom, and is covered and remains there, so the "honest and good heart" takes in and keeps the Word of God, and then, and then only, it becomes, to such an individual, the real, true, living word. The seed in the granary, or in a vessel, though it contains the living germ within it, cannot sprout and produce a crop: but it must be put into the soil, and be covered up and be kept by it; so the Word of God does not consist of the ink and paper of which the Bible is made up, nor of the mere sound and words of the living voice which we hear when it is preached to us; but the *thoughts* and *ideas* of God, for which the words, that we read and hear, stand, constitute the real Bible. These thoughts and ideas are presented to our minds, and when we understand them, receive them, treasure them up in our memories, keep and act upon them, they become to us the living Word of God—the

means, by the working of the Holy Spirit, of our conversion to God—the living seed which springs up and produces a harvest of good fruit. Thus the Holy Spirit "works faith in those who hear the gospel."

He cannot work faith in those represented by "the way-side," because, though they hear the word externally, they do not understand or receive it. Matthew says: "Understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." God's thoughts and truths are not comprehended, and if they lie for a short time upon the hardened wayside of the soul, Satan will soon gather them up. For the devil is afraid to let the seed of God's truth lie even upon the hardened hearts of wayside hearers, and therefore he "cometh immediately" and taketh it away. He finds many and easy ways to dissipate and remove these precious truths from their minds, or to have them trodden down and crushed by the world as soon as possible.

The case of the "stony ground" hearers is somewhat different, though equally sad. They "hear the word, and anon with joy receive it; yet have they not root in themselves, but dure for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by they are offended." The thin soil, spread over the surface of the rock, is sufficient, even with the moisture of the nightly dews, to sprout the grain, and give it a hurried start to grow; "but when the sun comes up it is scorched, and because it has no root, it withers away." Thousands gladly hear the

gospel, crowd to listen to an eloquent and talented preacher, and joyfully receive those portions of the truth which assure them of the goodness of God, the love of the Savior, the sweetness of pardoned sin, and the hopes and joys of heaven; but alas! "they have no root in themselves." When they come to understand that true religion requires repentance of sin, purity of heart and life, separation from the world in all its wicked ways and lusts, and the performance of Christian duties, "immediately they are offended."

They now resist not only the truth, but also the Spirit of God, so that he cannot "work faith" in their hearts.

"He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." All his time and attention, his thoughts and anxieties are so taken up with the affairs of the present life, with money-making and worldly business, that all religious ideas are either crowded out entirely, or soon choked and smothered. He never comes to the full development of true faith, or the existence of the divine life in his soul.

CHAPTER VI.

GOOD WORKS AS THE FRUITS AND EVIDENCE OF FAITH.

THE most vital point of the great controversy between the Reformers of the sixteenth century and the Papacy, and that which has given shape to the entire system of Protestant Theology from that day to this, was the subject of Justification. The Church of Rome had, for ages, entirely lost the true idea of this grand doctrine, and taught justification by *works*, and such works of human invention as were, many of them, silly and contemptible, and others absolutely wicked. By the help of God, the Reformers, and especially Luther, were enabled to restore the true Biblical apostolical doctrine "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."[1] This we have endeavored to set forth clearly and fully in the previous chapters of this discussion. It now remains that we should show, as far as we may be able, what place *Good Works* hold in the Evangelical system.

Let us look, for a few moments, at *the nature and*

[1] Rom. iii. 28.

spirit of the controversy with Rome in regard to this matter. Perhaps the following sharp passage from the Apology[1] of the great and good Melanchthon, will give us the best idea that we can obtain on this point, in a short compass. He says: "On the twentieth article" (of the Confession), "they" (that is the Romish authors of the so-called 'Confutation' of the Confession) "clearly express themselves in these terms:—that they reject and condemn our doctrine, in which we assert, that the people do not merit remission of their sins by good works. What need then is there of employing many words on this evident point? The great Doctors and Masters of the 'Confutation' here bring to open daylight what kind of a spirit speaks by them! For this is not a minor article in the Christian Church, but it is the chief and highest article, viz., that we obtain remission of our sins, without our merit, through Christ, and that not our works, but Christ is the propitiation for our sins, as St. Peter declares: 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.'[2] This strong testimony of ALL the holy prophets may justly be regarded as the decision of the catholic or universal church. For even one single prophet is great in the estimation of God, and a real world-treasure to this same holy church; and surely we should much rather believe the unanimous voice of all the prophets, than

[1] Form of Con., p. 202, 203. [2] Acts x. 43.

the graceless, godless sophists who drew up the 'Confutation,' and so blasphemously slander Christ. For although several teachers, who have written on this subject, have maintained, that after our sins have been forgiven, we obtain grace not through faith, but through our own works; yet have they not held that we obtain remission of our sins themselves on account of our works, and not for Christ's sake.

"It is therefore a detestable blasphemy thus to ascribe the honor due to Christ alone to our poor human works. And we feel comforted in the assurance that the royal, princely virtue of your Imperial Majesty, and also of the other princes, would not have permitted, had you known it, things so clearly false and unfounded to be inserted in the Confutation, by which God and the gospel are slandered before the whole world. For that this our article is certainly true and of divine authority, and that this is the sacred truth of God, we could prove by almost innumerable passages of Scripture, and also from the Fathers. For there is scarcely a page in the Bible, even in its most important books, where it is not clearly announced. We have said much upon these points, and all truly pious, God-fearing people, who know well why Christ has been given, would not for all the kingdoms and riches of the world, that Christ should not be our only Treasure, and our only Mediator and Redeemer; and these must here feel shocked and alarmed, that God's holy Word and truth should be so openly despised and condemned by poor, miserable men." How

mighty the conflict was by which the Reformers wrested this precious doctrine from the grasp of Rome; how high their estimate of its great and vital importance; and how sure they were that the teaching of the whole Bible was, that no man could be justified or saved by his own works and merits, must be abundantly clear to all, and we need pursue this part of the subject no further.

But what then of good works? As the Reformers were so decided and uncompromising in their rejection of the great and fatal error, which makes man his own savior, and sets aside Christ altogether, they were accused of "prohibiting good works!" This gave character to what they state in the Sixth and Twentieth Articles of the Augsburg Confession, from which we quote the following declarations. In the Sixth Article they say: "It is also taught, that such faith must bring forth good fruits and good works, and that we must do all manner of good works, as God has commanded, for God's sake; yet must not put confidence in those works, as if they merited favor in the sight of God; for we receive forgiveness of sins and justification through faith in Christ, as Christ himself says: "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."[1] The Twentieth Article is of an apologetic character, and we have the subject pre-

[1] Luke xvii. 10.

sented more in detail, and quite plainly and fully. We make the following extracts: "Our party are falsely accused of having prohibited good works; but their writings on the Ten Commandments and other subjects show, that they have given good and useful instructions and admonitions upon true Christian duties and works, concerning which, prior to this time, little had been taught, but almost in every sermon was urged continually the necessity of puerile and needless works, as rosaries, worship of saints, monastic vows, pilgrimages, stated fasts, holy-days, brotherhoods, etc. Works so needless, even our adversaries do not extol so highly now any more as formerly, besides they have also learned to treat of faith now, concerning which in former times they preached nothing at all; they teach now, however, that we are not justified before God by works alone, but add faith in Christ, saying, faith and works justify us before God—a doctrine which may afford more consolation than a doctrine teaching confidence in works alone." * * "It is taught further, that good works should and must be performed; not that we should put confidence in them, in order to merit grace, but to the glory of God and in accordance with his will. Faith alone ever secures grace and forgiveness of sins. And because the Holy Spirit is given through faith, the heart becomes qualified to perform good works. For before this, while it is without the Holy Spirit, it is too weak; besides it is in the power of Satan, who urges frail human nature to many sins.

As we see among the philosophers, who, undertaking to live honorably and unblamably, did not effect it, however, but fell into many great and open sins; so it happens with man, if he is without true faith and without the Holy Spirit, and governs himself alone by his own human powers. Wherefore, the doctrine concerning faith is not deserving of censure, saying that it prohibits good works, but should much rather be applauded for teaching the performance of real good works, and for offering assistance by which they may be performed. For without faith and out of Christ, human nature and ability are much too weak to do good works, to call upon God, to have patience in sufferings, to love our neighbor, to execute with assiduity commanded offices, to be obedient, to avoid evil lusts. Such exalted and righteous works cannot be performed without the assistance of Christ, as he himself says: "For without me, ye can do nothing."[1]

Having now given the main points of this subject, as presented in the Augsburg Confession, let us endeavor to obtain a clear and connected view of it as a whole. And of course the first question will be, *What are good works?* In the abstract, and in themselves considered, they are manifestly the opposite of *bad* works. All the actions and works of men are either good or bad. And as the holy and perfect law of God is the standard of moral right, all actions are good or bad as they agree or disagree with this

[1] John xv. 5.

law. In this sense men who are not Christians, and even bad men, may do good works. That is, they may, and often do, perform acts that are in themselves morally right or good, that is, in external conformity with the divine law. Such are all acts of natural goodness, benevolence, charity, kindness, justice, truth, uprightness, and the like. Sometimes the motives which prompt such deeds may not be good, but even then the actions in themselves are good. To show mercy to the poor and afflicted—to feed the hungry and clothe the naked—to aid in the promotion of any cause which tends to enlighten and elevate mankind and better their condition, must always be considered acts that are right and good, from whatever motives done, or by whomsoever done. So, according to the plain statement of the Apostle Paul, even the *heathen*, who are without revealed religion, may do good works: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another."[1] They have not *another* standard of right, not another and different morality, but the *same* law, "written in their hearts."

But Christianity brings us to a higher and grander view of this subject. It shows us that the law of God

[1] Rom. ii. 14, 15.

is the standard, by which not only our outward actions and works are to be regulated and determined, but also the condition of our hearts, our thoughts, feelings, motives, and desires. It requires *purity of heart.* Every part and precept of this law may be trangressed, and is transgressed, in the heart, before the outward act is performed, and even where that act is never performed; and so outward conformity of the deed or work to the requirements of the divine law, while the heart and motive is in a contrary state, is not obeying that law at all in the sight of God. No father would regard his son as obeying him, in any proper sense, whose heart was turned away from him and opposed to him, however good and right the deed itself might be. The Word of God plainly teaches that the heart and disposition are chiefly regarded by the Lord. "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."[1] "For the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins."[2] "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."[3] "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."[4]

What then are good works in this *higher and Christian sense?* The reply is, "They are works performed with an obedient and believing heart in accordance with the will and command of God."[5] Schmid, in his

[1] 1 Samuel xvi. 7. [2] Ps. vii. 9. [3] Jer. xvii. 10. [4] Matt. v. 8. [5] Hunnius, p. 231.

Dogmatic Theology, says, in substance, that they are the acts of regenerated persons, that are in agreement with the divine will, whether external or internal. They are called good, not because they are in themselves absolutely perfect and good, for such are not possible to poor sinful man; but because they proceed from persons reconciled to God by faith, and from motives that are pure and well pleasing in his sight.[1] Hence in this highest and best sense good works can be performed by *true Christians* only—by such as have been justified by faith, regenerated by the Spirit and grace of God, and reconciled through Christ. No one else can perform them: "For without faith and out of Christ, human nature and ability are much too weak to do good works"—that is, such high and noble virtues, as the true and spiritual worship of God, true patience under sufferings and insults, love to our neighbor as to ourselves, the fulfillment of real Christian duties and offices, obedience to the divine commands, and the subduing of our evil passions and lusts. These are fruits of the Spirit and of faith; and the Holy Spirit can dwell in that heart only that is renewed and cleansed, and reconciled to God by faith in Christ. "But without faith it is impossible to please God."[2] "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's, have crucified

[1] Schmid's Dogmatik, pp. 384, 385. [2] Heb. xi. 6.

the flesh, with the affections and lusts."[1] It is clear then that such good works cannot *precede* faith, or exist without it; but must come *after* it, as the fruits and evidence of it. We must not look for the fruit before the tree is planted and has grown, for the tree must produce the fruit.

It is evident too that these good works can proceed only from *pure motives*. It is the design of an act always which gives real character to it. And as "the Lord looketh upon the heart," so he must regard mainly the motive with which the act is performed. "An action, therefore that is good and lawful in itself, but performed from impure and unworthy motives, as from vanity, ambition, or for the gratification of evil passions, is no good work. Only then does the Christian perform good works, when he acts from grateful love to God and his Savior, and a sincere desire to do the divine will—in a word, from pure Christian motives."[2] And this leads us to notice the fact that works to be really good must be such as *God has commanded* and as are agreeable to his will. Not of man's devising, as many of the vain and ridiculous things, called good works by the Roman Catholics, as their penances, fastings, adoration of relics, "vain repetitions" of prayers to the Virgin Mary and other saints, and the like. The authors of the Form of Concord say: "It is the will, arrangement, and command of God, that believers should walk in good

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[1] Gal. v. 22–24. [2] Dr. G. C. Knapp's Theol., Vol. II., p. 353.

works, and real good works are not such as each one may, according to his own notion, or human ordinances, imagine to himself, or as are wrought by his own natural powers, but such as are prescribed and commanded in God's Word and as are performed by those who are reconciled to him by faith in Christ, and renewed by the Holy Ghost, or, as St. Paul says, "are created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works."[1]

The connection of Good Works with Faith and Salvation. We have already seen, in our quotations from the Augsburg Confession, what the Reformers taught in regard to the necessity of Good Works. "Such faith must bring forth good fruits and good works, and we must do all manner of good works." "Good works should and must be performed." But we must examine more fully their relation to faith and salvation. On this subject we have some plain and striking declarations by Luther in his "Smalcald Articles." These articles were written by him in 1537, seven years after the presentation of the Confession. They were to be submitted to a general council, had one been held, and were intended to show *what points*, if any, hitherto maintained by the Protestants, they might or would be able to yield. We give what he says in a somewhat free translation: "What I have hitherto and constantly taught on these subjects, I know not at all how to change, namely, that it is by faith that we obtain other, new, and pure hearts, as

[1] Form of Con., p. 555.

St. Peter has it, "Purifying their hearts by faith;"[1] and that God, for the sake of Christ, our Mediator, will and does regard us as entirely righteous and holy, notwithstanding sin in the flesh is not yet entirely removed or dead, yet will he not remember it nor impute it to us.

And upon such faith, renewing, and pardon of sins, good works follow. What, in such a person, is yet sinful and imperfect, shall, alone for the sake of Christ, not be reckoned as sin and imperfection. Such an individual shall be called, and shall *be* entirely righteous and holy, both as regards his person and his works, and all this out of pure grace and mercy, abundantly poured out and bestowed upon us. Hence there can be no boasting of our many virtues and good works, if they are to be looked upon as not of grace and mercy; but as the Apostle says: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord;"[2] That is, that he has a gracious God—thus all is good. We also declare further, that where good works do not follow, there also faith is false and not genuine."[3]

There have always, from the commencement of Christianity, been some difficulties and controversies connected with this subject. The questions have been somewhat like the following: Are we saved by the Law without the Gospel, or by the Gospel without the Law?—by faith without works, or by works without faith? Or if by both united, what is the relation

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[1] Acts xv. 9. [2] 1 Cor. i. 31. [3] Form of Con., p. 304.

of each to our salvation? What does faith do, and what is the office of works? The Jews, in the time of Christ, having almost entirely lost all spiritual religion, had only the form, the shell, the husk left. They felt sure that if they kept the law of Moses *externally*, and the traditions of the elders, they must be saved, especially as they were the children of Abraham—the children of the covenant! And they demanded that Christ and his apostles should come up fully to their standard, and do, in everything, as they did—otherwise he must be an impostor. But when Jesus preached unto them a religion of the heart—that they must repent of their sins, be "born again," have a better righteousness than that of the scribes and Pharisees, or they should in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven, they thought he was opposing and destroying the system of Moses. Hence our Lord corrects them, and tells them plainly: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."[1]

It is so still. Christianity is not intended to put away the law, except so far as a change of dispensation necessarily puts away the Jewish *ceremonial* and *state* law. But the great *moral* law given to the Jews is but a transcript of the divine character, and, like God himself, is eternal and unchangeable.

So also when St. Paul had declared, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his

[1] Matt. v. 17.

sight,"[1] and "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law,"[2] he almost immediately adds, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."[3] But how is this, then, that Christ does not destroy the law or the prophets, but fulfills them, and that though we are "justified by faith without the deeds of the law," we do not thereby "make void the law," but establish it, and are still bound to live by it and keep it? Simply and clearly, no deeds of law which we can perform can secure to us pardon of sin and righteousness before God—because our best deeds are imperfect—these blessings come to us by faith in Christ: nevertheless the law is and remains to us a rule of life, and the very object of Christ's redemption, and of pardon and righteousness through him, is to bring us back, and restore us to sweet, full, and eternal obedience of God's good and holy law.

Besides, what *is faith* and what are *works*, in this high Christian sense of these terms? Are they things so different and so far apart that they cannot exist together, but that one must destroy the other? By no means. On the contrary, is there not a practical view in which they are but two parts of one and the same thing? St. James says: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone,"[4] or by itself. And Luther says: "Where good works do not follow, there also faith is false and not genuine." If

[1] Rom. iii. 20. [2] Rom. iii. 28. [3] Rom iii. 31. [4] James ii. 17.

then real good works are the *life* of faith—if it cannot be true and genuine without them—are they not parts of one great whole? Is not the *life* of a man a part of the man? Or if good works are the fruits of faith, are not fruits, in an important sense, a part of the tree? Suppose we say, that originally both the tree and fruits are productions of God, are they not parts of the same production? If faith is *trust* in Christ for salvation, are not good works the *acting out* of that same trust and confidence? Faith is not something dead, but a living principle in the heart, and to live it must act, and its actions are good works. As soon as it ceases to act it dies, and there is neither faith nor works. Faith must increase and grow—"That we be no more children, * * but may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ;"[1] but to grow it must exercise itself in all manner of good works, and they are faith in action. When, by faith, I trust in Christ, cast myself upon him alone for salvation, as a poor, lost sinner, without any merit or worthiness of my own, this is itself an *act*, a deed, not deserving anything, but *seeking* and obtaining what he has promised, and, out of pure grace, bestows upon me; and the very *essence* of this act is that I *submit* to my Savior unreservedly, now and forever, to live and labor, to love and serve him to the end; and all the possible good works of my whole future being, not yet done indeed, but purposed, are embraced in this act of consecra-

[1] Eph. iv. 14, 15

tion. In this act I have no reference to my past good works or "deeds of the law"—I find them to be worse than nothing—"all my righteousness is as filthy rags"—I am a condemned and most guilty sinner—and if I am justified it must be "without the deeds of the law" in my case, that is sure, just as Paul says: and yet I now give myself to Christ with all that I have and am, "in order that I may be his, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and happiness." I am justified *now*, by faith alone, without the *future* good works which must follow, because they have not yet been performed, although they exist in the *purpose*, and God sees them there. From all this it is clear, that true Christian good works are necessary to the completion of faith. There is not, there cannot be, true justifying faith without them in purpose, and, as soon as time is given, in action. Good works are not only the fruits of faith, but the acts of faith, or better still, they are *faith itself in action*, faith living, and growing, and moving.

The language of the Apostle James is to the point: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man

may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab, the harlot, justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."[1]

We have quoted this whole passage here, because it clearly illustrates the subject before us, and yet, strange to say, has been frequently misapprehended and misapplied. It has been maintained that James here certainly and plainly teaches that we are justified *by works*, and that he positively contradicts Paul, with whom he cannot be reconciled! But we trust we shall be able, without difficulty, to vindicate this portion of God's Word, and to show that these two Apostles not only do not contradict each other, but

[1] James ii. 14–26.

that the statements of both taken together are necessary to the clear and full presentation and understanding of the grand subject. And, first, James does not speak of works as *preceding* faith, or setting it aside, or being a substitute for it, or as being disconnected from it; but as being the completion and necessary outworking of it. According to him, faith exists first, and it is not an empty, cold, dead profession, which *wishes* well to the naked and hungry, and *says* "be ye warmed and filled," but *gives* them nothing; but it is a living, active principle, which manifests itself in obeying God, and in works of benevolence amongst men—a faith that works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. In the second place he does not say that Abraham was justified by works *without* faith; but "Abraham BELIEVED God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness;" and this faith was so strong that it did not hesitate or doubt for a moment, but *acted* promptly in obeying God by offering up his son Isaac, and thus he was justified. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect." It would not have been complete faith without the work, because the work was then commanded, and it was possible for Abraham immediately to perform it. In fact it could not have been said that he *believed* God at all, had he not *obeyed* him. "Was not then our father Abraham justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" But it was by the *works of faith*, or faith working. Now we ask,

does Paul contradict this teaching of James, when he declares: "By *faith* Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only-begotten son?"[1] By no means. They both teach precisely the same thing. By *faith*, says Paul, Abraham offered up his son. Very well, the offering itself was an act, *a work*, and faith did the work—faith acting. Faith existed first, believed God, and was manifested and perfected in this act or work. It was Abraham's faith that obeyed God and did the work, and so of all believers.

But does not Paul say that we are justified by faith *without* works? Yes he does: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."[2] Now does he not contradict James when he says: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only?"[3] Not at all. By faith a man is justified, in the sight of God, without the deeds of the law; that is, *as soon* as a man exercises saving faith in a crucified Redeemer, his sins are pardoned and he is received into favor with God in consequence of that faith *before he has had time* "to show his faith by his works." The tree first, then the fruits. God saw that his faith was sincere and true, and that its fruits, good works, were purposed and would follow, and therefore justified him *before* he became fruitful in good works, and without them. And yet these future good works are

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[1] Heb. xi. 17. [2] Rom. iii. 28. [3] Jas. ii. 24.

a necessary part of that faith, and "by works" it must be "made perfect:" therefore James might well say, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." He can continue in a state of justification only by the continuance of his faith, and the faith that continues must live, act and move, in good works and a holy life all the time. But it is evident that St. Paul referred to such "deeds of the law" as *precede* faith, and are entirely without it, and St. James refers to such "good works" as come *after* faith, and are a necessary part of it, and this perfectly reconciles the whole matter. The Jews expected to be justified and saved because they were the children of Abraham, were circumcised, and kept the law externally, especially also in all its *ceremonial* requirements—this constituted their righteousness. Christ and the Apostles, and especially Paul, showed them that they could not be saved in this way. Hence Jesus says: "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."[1] And St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, goes fully into the subject: "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness" (that is such righteousness as the Jews sought), "have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath

[1] Matt. v. 20.

not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law."[1] * * "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."[2] Here then we have the matter plainly before us, and it is to this Jewish righteousness, which was not of God, that he refers, when he says: "By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."[3] But Paul, as well as James, and Christ himself, requires that good works should *follow* faith as the fruits and evidence of it. Knapp, in his Christian Theology, has the following brief and clear exposition of this subject, which I will give, in a free translation, from the German: "Paul excludes our obedience of the divine law from all share in procuring grace or pardon, that is, he maintains that it is no ground of our obtaining this favor of God, because we do not really so obey the divine law as to be able to apply to ourselves the promises of God annexed to true obedience; and yet he has declared that he will be gracious to us; this must therefore be in a different way, and by other means—namely by faith. Hence he entirely excludes those deeds of the law, or our imaginary fulfillment of the divine commands, from faith in Christ and our consequent pardon and salvation. But those good works, those virtuous actions, which flow from true

[1] Rom. ix. 30–32. [2] Rom. x. 3. [3] Rom. iii. 20.

love to God and Christ, he as little excludes as do the Savior and the Apostle James; but, like these, deduces them from faith, and insists upon them as strongly as they do, and that too in the same connection in which he denies all merit to "the deeds of the law:" as in Romans ii. 6, 7: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them, who, by patient continuance, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality," (God will render) "eternal life." And in Eph. ii. 10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Paul and James are, therefore, perfectly agreed in this matter. There is no difference of meaning in the words *faith* and *justified*, but only in the word *works*. Paul speaks of the silly conceit by which men would obtain life and salvation from God by their imaginary fulfillment of the divine law, while in reality they have not properly obeyed that law at all; and James is speaking of those good works, those pious and unassuming virtues, which are the fruits and evidence of faith, which God will reward. The former, Paul and James both, with Christ, reject; the latter the Savior with the Apostles earnestly and emphatically require and urge upon men."[1]

It is evident that on this subject two extremes must be avoided: the one is usually called *Antinomianism*, and the other *Pelagianism*. The first, or Antinomian-

[1] Knapp's Christ. Theol., Vol. II., p. 351.

ism, as the name implies, maintains, "That the law is of no use or obligation under the gospel dispensation —or it holds doctrines that clearly supersede the necessity of good works or a virtuous life."[1] Says the man who holds this view, we are justified by faith "without the deeds of the law," and therefore the law is altogether unnecessary to our salvation—we have nothing at all to do with it, as we are "not under the law, but under grace." There existed quite a controversy in the Lutheran Church, already in the sixteenth century, especially after the death of Luther, as to whether good works were *necessary to salvation* or not? The affirmative of this question was maintained by Major, a Wittenburg theologian, and some Melanchthonians, while others, as Flacius, opposed it. And Amsdorf, of Naumburg (1559), even went so far as to declare that they were *injurious* to salvation, or a hinderance to it! "A terrible position," says Knapp, "if we should understand him to mean that the keeping of God's commandments tended to our condemnation!" But this was evidently not what he wished to say. He desired only to maintain, that if men imagined that they could *merit* salvation by their good works, they were a hinderance to them, and so far he was undoubtedly correct. For this was in reality the Romish theory, which practically rejects Christ, and makes man his own savior. But the opposite party were right also in maintaining, that good

[1] Watson, Theol. Dic., p. 63.

works *are necessary* to salvation, in the sense that they must of necessity follow faith, just as fire must give out heat, the sun send forth light, and the stream flow from the fountain. The whole Antinomian error is, therefore, answered in the few words, that truly good works are a part of faith itself, and that there can be no real faith, and of course no salvation, without them. We have already said enough on this point, and need pursue it no further.

Pelagianism, on the other hand, has little or no use for divine grace or assistance in the work of our salvation. It holds, "That mankind derived no injury from the sin of Adam; that we are now as capable of obedience to the will of God as he was; and that it is possible for men, provided they fully employ the powers and faculties with which they are endued, to live without sin."[1] Of course this is virtually denying original sin, and the necessity of a Savior, altogether. But this error has also been sufficiently exposed in the former parts of these discussions, and requires no further notice now.

[1] Watson, Theol. Dic., p. 734.

CHAPTER VII.

SANCTIFICATION.

WE have already seen, in these discussions, that the terms *righteousness* and *holiness*, using these two words as synonymous, have, in the Scriptures and in Christian theology, several meanings.

1. *A person or object separated from a common or secular use, and devoted to the service of God, is called holy.* Thus Palestine was called "the holy land," Jerusalem, "the holy city," and our churches and many other things, which can have no *moral* quality, are holy. The whole Jewish nation were called "the holy people," "the congregation of the saints," "the righteous nation," though many of them were vile sinners, and anything else than morally pure. They were *separated* from all the nations of the earth, as the Lord expressly told them: "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth."[1] So we may yet speak of the whole body of professing Christians as saints, the people of God, or a holy people, not meaning that they are all *sanctified*.

[1] Deut. xiv. 2.

2. There is such a thing as an *external righteousness*, which even an unconverted and irreligious man may have. This is the same as morality, a high and noble quality, but not necessarily religious. An individual may lead an externally correct life; may discharge his duties towards his fellow men in the family, the community, and the State; may be honest and truthful in all his dealings; may abstain from all outward vices, and practice the social virtues of honesty, benevolence, and kindness; may be industrious, sober, and a very good and useful citizen; and yet be entirely without that *purity of heart*, of which the Savior speaks, when he says: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."[1] In fact such a man knows nothing about the plague of his own heart, nor of his guilt and danger in the sight of God. He has not repented of his sins, nor felt the need of a Savior, and has no love to God and holy things. To the sublime heights of a true Christian morality even his thoughts have never ascended. He has no just conceptions of the holiness and justice of God, or the spirituality and perfection of his moral government. He regards himself as good enough, and needing nothing more. Like the young man in the gospel, he is ready to say of God's commandments: "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"[2] He does not see, nor understand, that though by outward act he may not have violated

[1] Matt. v. 8. [2] Matt. xix. 20.

these commandments, yet in his *heart* he has broken them all a thousand times. Heart sins are entirely concealed from him; and yet these are, after all, the *real* sins of a man's life. Because sin is always committed in the heart first, and there is the seat of its true character. The murderer, the adulterer, the thief, all commit these crimes in the heart first, and then in the outward acts. Hence says the Savior: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, these are the things which defile a man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."[1]

It is clear, therefore, that such outward righteousness, though in itself beautiful and right, cannot stand before God, nor save any man's soul. "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."[2]

3. *Believers have the imputed righteousness of faith.* This subject has already been presented in a preceding chapter, and hence we need only to introduce it here again in so far as it is necessary to enable us to obtain a clear view of the difference between this righteousness *of faith*, and that internal renovation and purification of our hearts, which is properly called our *sanctification.*

The righteousness of faith, then, let us clearly understand, is not our personal moral purity at all—not

[1] Matt. xv. 19–20. [2] 1 Samuel xvi. 7.

something wrought *in* us, but something obtained *for* us, and *given to us* by Jesus Christ. It is *his* righteousness imputed to us, or set over to our account. Christ fulfilled God's perfect and holy law in our stead, and thus obtained a complete and perfect righteousness, which, with himself, he gives to us, the moment we truly believe in him, or accept him as our Savior. Thus, at his baptism, Christ said to John: "It becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."[1] And in his sermon on the mount he says: "I am not come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."[2] Thus Christ did fulfill the law and "all righteousness." So says Paul: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."[3] And again: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."[4] And also: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."[5] Two quotations from human authorities may suffice on this point. Richard Watson, good Methodist authority, in his Theological Dictionary, says: "This righteousness of Christ denotes, not only his absolute perfection, but is taken for his perfect obedience unto death, and his suffering the penalty of the law in our stead." The other is from Schmid's Dogmatic Theology, good Lutheran authority: "But this obedience of

[1] Matt. iii. 15. [2] Matt. v. 17. [3] Rom. v. 19. [4] Rom. x. 4. [5] 1 Cor. i. 30.

Christ, to accomplish its object, must be of a two-fold nature: first, it must cause that God shall no longer regard men as having failed to satisfy the demands of his holy law; which will be the case when he who proposes to render satisfaction, has, in men's stead, so fulfilled the whole law, that by him has now been done that which men had neglected. And, in the second place, it must cause, that guilt shall no longer rest on men, on account of which they deserve punishment; and this will be the case when the substitute has taken the punishment upon himself. But Christ has effected both: the first by his *active* obedience, which consists in a most perfect fulfillment of the law; for here he who, for himself, was not under the law, fulfilled it in men's stead; and the second he effected by his *passive* obedience, which consists in a most full endurance of the punishment which awaited us; for here he suffered that which men should have suffered, and thus took their punishment upon himself, and atoned for their sins."[1]

This atonement for the sins of men, God has accepted, and this active and passive obedience of Christ therefore constitutes a most perfect righteousness, which is imputed to believers by faith, and it is in the possession of this alone that they stand acquitted before God, and become well-pleasing in his sight. For as God's law is absolutely perfect, it required an

[1] Schmid's Dog. Theol., p. 275.

absolutely perfect obedience, which poor fallen man had not rendered, and never could render, and therefore he had no righteousness of his own, and never could obtain any by his own works or merits, in which to appear in the presence of his Maker. Hence it must be *given* to him, and is bestowed upon him, out of pure grace, when he believes in Jesus. Therefore the authors of the Form of Concord say: "Neither contrition, nor love, nor any other virtue, but FAITH alone is the medium and instrument, by and through which we can receive and embrace the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and the remission of sins; which blessings are offered unto us in the promise of the gospel."[1]

This is *Justification*, or the righteousness of faith; but clearly it is not *Sanctification;* and the Reformers were exceedingly anxious that the two should not be confounded or mixed together, nor the one put for the other. Hence they say: "But if we wish to retain, in its purity, the article concerning justification, we must be very diligent and cautious, lest that which *precedes* faith, and that which *follows* it, be at the same time intermingled and introduced into the article concerning justification as necessary and pertaining to it. For it is not one and the same thing to speak of *Conversion* and Justification." And again they say: "Although renovation and sanctification are also a benefaction from Christ the Mediator, and

[1] Form of Concord, page 547.

a work of the Holy Spirit, yet they do not pertain to the article or subject of justification before God, but they follow after it."[1]

4. *Sanctification.* What then is sanctification in its proper sense, as distinguished from the righteousness of faith or justification? The short answer to this question is: It is that internal work of divine grace, by which our hearts and our lives are conformed to the law of God, and which constitutes our personal holiness. Ridgley, in his "Body of Divinity," gives the following definition: "Sanctification is a progressive work, by which we daily consecrate or devote ourselves to God; and our actions all have a tendency to advance his glory; and by the Spirit we are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness; so that it is not barely one single act of grace, but it continues in the whole progress of the work of grace, as gradually carried on till perfected in glory."[2] The late Dr. S. S. Schmucker, in his "Popular Theology," gives the following more clear and precise definition: "Sanctification is a progressive conformity to the divine law, and an increasing ability to fulfill its requisitions, wrought in the faithful believer by the Spirit of God, through the means of grace."[3] It is usually regarded as a consequence of regeneration, and as commencing with and growing out of our justification by faith: but in its broadest sense it *includes* the entire work of man's renovation

[1] Form of Con., page 545. [2] Ridgley's Body of Divinity, Vol. III., p. 154. [3] Popular Theology, page 161.

and purification from a vile sinner until he becomes a saint in glory. It has many degrees or stages of advancement, according to the circumstances and faithfulness of those who are the subjects of it. Every step forward, in personal goodness and purity of heart and life, is an advance in sanctification, from first to last. In the Scriptures it is sometimes called *righteousness*, as when men are said to be righteous as to their personal moral character, and to practice righteousness, or to lead righteous lives, and it is both external and internal, including holiness of heart and purity of life. Thus God said to Noah: "For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation."[1] When God was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham, in his prayer, asked the Lord: "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"[2] In the first Psalm David says: "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish."[3] And again: "Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times."[4] "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."[5] And the Apostle Peter says: "But in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him."[6] And speaking of the Savior he says: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being

[1] Gen. vii. 1. [2] Gen. xviii. 23. [3] Ps. i. 6. [4] Ps. cvi. 3. [5] Is. xlviii. 18. [6] Acts x. 35.

dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes we are healed."[1]

So likewise it is a clear doctrine of God's word that sin does not and cannot *reign* in those who have this righteousness, or who are the subjects of sanctification: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." "For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ," (evidently by repentance of our sins and faith in him), "we believe that we shall also live with him;" that is in a new life of faith and holiness:—"knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." So if we be dead to sin, we can no longer live in it, nor can it live in us. "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."[2]

So also there are various passages in the Bible, referring to this great moral renovation, which speak of men as being *pure*, *holy*, *sanctified*, *perfect*, or which demand of us that we shall become such. Let us look at a few of the most important of these. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."[3]

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[1] 1 Pet. ii. 24. [2] Rom. vi. 6–12. [3] Matt. v. 8.

By the heart here is of course meant the soul, the spiritual nature of man. This is to be *pure*, pure in the *intellect*, the understanding, knowledge, thoughts and ideas—pure in the *sensibilities*, the feelings and emotions—pure in the *will*, the motives, aims and actions. The work of sanctification is to effect such purity. Again: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."[1] "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."[2] "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."[3] "And there shall in no wise enter into it (heaven) any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."[4] "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."[5] "That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."[6] "That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."[7] "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."[8] "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification."[9] "Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."[10] "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."[11]

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[1] 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. [2] Heb. xii. 14. [3] Eph. v. 5. [4] Rev. xxi. 27. [5] Matt. v. 48. [6] Col. iv. 12. [7] James i. 4. [8] 2 Tim. iii. 17. [9] 1 Thess. iv. 3. [10] 2 Thess. ii. 13. [11] John xvii. 17.

It is clear from all this, and much more that might be quoted from the Divine Word, that not only is *pardon* of sin necessary—justification and the imputed righteousness of Christ—but also *personal holiness*. And whilst the two are distinct, and not to be confounded or intermingled, they are nevertheless found together in the heart and life of every true child of God. The one cannot exist without the other.

"New Obedience," as the Reformers called this new life of piety and holiness, with its good fruits and good works, does not *exist before* justification, nor can it by any possibility exist without it, and hence of course can constitute no part of our justification, nor in any way aid in procuring it: but the new life, obedience, and works of piety and holiness come *after* it, are the results of it, and the evidence that our faith is genuine and living. And yet it is true that a process of renovation, or you may also call it sanctification, has commenced in the sinner's heart *before* he is justified, and "the incipient righteousness of new obedience" commences simultaneously with the righteousness of faith. We cannot have saving faith, and therefore cannot be justified, that is, have forgiveness of sins and the righteousness of Christ, without sincere and thorough REPENTANCE. We must first have heard the *call of God*, and have been so far enlightened by his Word and Spirit, as to understand the justice and holiness of the divine law, and our own guilt and danger—we must have true and godly sorrow for our sins, and confess and for-

sake them, before we can come to Christ for pardon and salvation. And is not all this a process of renovation, or purification, not yet completed, but commenced and carried thus far by God's Spirit, before the man is justified? Most certainly it is. And now, having experienced this, and anxiously inquiring, What must we do to be saved? we are directed to Jesus, as the only Savior of the lost, the only hope and refuge of the perishing, and casting ourselves wholly upon him, "We are justified by faith, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And now we have the righteousness of Christ by faith, and at the same moment also commences the new life, "the new obedience," and we have a personal righteousness or sanctification in its incipient stage. In CHRIST'S righteousness we are *perfectly* holy, yea, *divinely* holy, for it is his own robe of immaculate purity with which Jesus clothes the believing soul; but has he put this spotless robe on a vile, polluted, filthy sinner, and with it covered up his moral deformity? No! a thousand times no! Such indeed he was—such were we all—"but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."[1] Christ has regenerated that soul, and washed it clean in his own blood—"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 11.

the Holy Ghost."[1] That soul is "born again," "born of water and of the Spirit;"[2] "he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."[3] Jesus not only gives this believing soul, the moment that it believes, his imputed righteousness, that is, gives *himself* to it, but he also gives it a personal righteousness, a *new nature, which he makes morally pure*—that is in its *incipiency*—he is a new born babe, a perfect human being, but not a fully developed man. There is no sin in the *new* nature, for it is of heavenly birth; but there is yet sin "in the flesh" of the "old man," in which the new nature is to grow and be developed: but this new nature is now to grow up in the image and likeness of God, and as it gains strength, it overcomes, by the grace of God, not only the world and the devil, but also "the flesh," or old nature, until this is entirely subdued, and the new man reigns in complete control.

This commencement of our personal sanctification is "the incipient renovation," and "the incipient righteousness of new obedience," of which the authors of the Form of Concord speak, as in the following extracts: "For true contrition precedes justification. And to those who are thus justified before God, and received into his grace, for the sake of Christ, the only Mediator, out of pure grace, through faith alone, without any of their works and merit, the

[1] Titus iii. 5. [2] John iii. 5. [3] 2 Cor. v. 17.

Holy Spirit is also given, who renews and sanctifies them, and works in them love to God and their neighbor. But since this incipient renovation remains imperfect in this life, and sin still dwells in the flesh, even with the regenerate, righteousness before God is by faith, and consists in the gracious imputation of Christ's righteousness, without the addition of our own works; so that our sins are *forgiven* and *covered* and *not imputed* to us."

Now let us be sure that we clearly understand this important subject, even at the expense of some repetition. Every true believer has a *two-fold* righteousness: He has the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to him by faith, and in this he stands justified before God; and he has also the beginning of a personal righteousness or holiness in his own soul, which commenced at the same time with the other, and must continue and increase to the end of life. This latter is, and will be, more or less developed according to the believer's faithfulness, and the advancement which he makes in divine knowledge and grace. The former, as we have seen before, is a work wrought *for* him by Christ, and is given, reckoned, or imputed to him when he believes, and as long as he truly believes in Jesus; and the latter is a work wrought *in* his heart by the Holy Spirit through the means of grace, and consists in personal moral purity. The former is *justification*, and the latter is *sanctification* or *holiness*.

The change wrought in the soul of man when he

believes and is justified is very great and thorough, and this is the beginning and foundation of our sanctification. Faith forms an important element in this great moral change; and the terms *conversion, regeneration, born again, a change of heart,* and the like, are used to express it. Not that these terms are strictly synonymous, but they are nevertheless so used. In common language men say of an individual, he has been "converted," or "been born again," or has experienced a "change of heart," and they mean thereby that wonderful moral change, wrought in his soul by the Holy Spirit, by which he became a true child of God. The ignorance of the carnal mind, and its enmity to God and his law, have been taken away, the understanding, the affections, and the will are renewed, and supreme love to God and his moral government is produced, accompanied by love to his neighbor and all that is good, and this renewal of the heart is succeeded by reformation of life.

The Scriptures use very strong language in describing this change, as in the following passages. David prays: "*Create* in me a clean heart, O God; and *renew* a right spirit within me."[1] And the Savior declares: "Except ye *repent,* ye shall all likewise perish."[2] "Verily I say unto you, except ye be *converted,* and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."[3] "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be *born again* he can-

[1] Ps. li. 10. [2] Luke xiii. 3. [3] Matt. xviii. 3.

not seen the kingdom of God."[1] And the Apostle Paul has language no less clear and strong: "That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, *the old man*, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts: and be *renewed in the spirit of your minds;* and that *ye put on the new man*, which after God is *created* in righteousness and true holiness."[2] Mark the expression here—the new creation is "in righteousness and true holiness"—it is therefore a sanctified production. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature*."[3] "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."[4] Now is it not clear, that this must be a very great and wonderful change which requires such language, in the Word of God, to describe it? Look at it! It is a *new creation*, the creating of a *clean heart* and renewing of a *right spirit*—it is to be *converted*, to *repent*, to be *born again*, to *put off the old man*, and *put on the new man*, created after God in righteousness and true holiness—to be renewed in the *spirit of the mind*, so that all things have become new. It is a complete renovation of our sinful nature—such a purification of the heart as is and must be followed by purity of life. It consists of several parts, to which reference has already been made in other connections, as knowledge and conviction of sin, godly sorrow for sin and repentance of it, confessing

[1] John iii. 3. [2] Eph. iv. 23-24. [3] Gal. vi. 15. [4] 2 Cor. v. 17.

and forsaking it, and faith in Christ. And no man can obtain the blessing of justification, or pardon and the imputation of Christ's righteousness, who has not been thus renewed. There is no such thing as the justification of an impenitent or unregenerate man; because he cannot exercise true faith in Christ. Only the awakened, truly humbled and penitent soul, mourning over sin and earnestly seeking deliverance from it, can trust in Christ, in reality, for salvation. And if a believer should so backslide as to fall again into willful sin, he could not and would not then be in a state of justification and peace with God. It will do no man any good to persuade himself that he believes in Christ, and to say, "I trust in him," who continues in any known and willful sins. He is deceived. His faith and trust are not true. Christ came not to save men *in* their sins, or *with* their sins, but *from* their sins. "And thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins."[1] "Whosoever abideth in him (Christ) sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. * * Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."[2] That is plainly, he cannot sin willfully and knowingly.

And as it is true, on the one hand, that every justified man must be a converted man, and cannot live in any sin; so, on the other, it is also true that he

[1] Matt. i. 21. [2] 1 John iii. 6, 9.

must have *positive* personal holiness. Having experienced the great moral change spoken of, his sins have been confessed and *forsaken*, as well as forgiven, and he is now also, as to the new nature, morally pure, and he must now go forward, "perfecting holiness in the fear of God."[1] He is a *new* man, and so far also a *holy* man. He has new life, new light, new love, new peace, new joy, new hope. His understanding, his affections, and his will are renewed, and so far as they are renewed, they are also sanctified. He has different thoughts and ideas from those he once had, different feelings, and different volitions and mental acts, all eventuating in a new life of holiness. This change, which he has experienced, has been from death to life, darkness to light, sin to holiness, and "from the power of Satan unto God."[2] The new light shining upon his soul is a *pure* and *holy* light, coming from God himself; the new life enkindled is a holy life; the new control, under which he has been brought, is a holy power, that of God's Spirit and truth. Satan has been dislodged from the throne of his heart, and driven out, and the Holy Spirit has taken his place, and all the powers of the renewed man are on the side of holiness.

We now see the true foundation, the commencement and nature, of this work of our sanctification. Regeneration is God's first great act in making a sinner holy. It is in itself complete and perfect; but

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[1] 2 Cor. vii. 1. [2] Acts xxvi. 18.

still it is only the *first* great act. Much more remains to be done to make all out of man that God designs to make out of him—this is only the first step, the first stage in the grand process of his restoration, elevation, enlightenment, and moral perfection. This regenerated man is a *perfect* Christian man in the same sense that the healthy new born babe is a perfect human being—not a fully developed man.

What now is the *future* work of his sanctification? I answer, it is of a *two-fold* nature, which, perhaps, I may call *negative* and *positive*. My meaning will become clear in a moment. There must and will be a *pulling down* and a *building up*, a *putting off* and a *putting on*, a *decaying* and a *growing*, a *dying* and a *living*, a *decreasing* and an *increasing*. The "old man," the "old Adam," "the flesh," that is, the old sinful nature and evil habits must, and by the grace of God, will be pulled down, put off, and decrease, decay, and utterly die and be destroyed; and "the new man," "the new creature," that is, the renewed and regenerated nature, the good and pure desires, feelings, aims, and volitions, which have been produced, must be cherished and nourished, must not only live, but *increase* and *grow*, and good and holy habits must be formed and become strong and controlling. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."[1] "Seeing that ye have put off the old man

[1] Eph. iv. 24.

with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."[1] "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."[2] There is an outward man and there is an "inward man;"[3] the outward man must be crucified, "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin;"[4] but "the inward man is renewed day by day."[5] Most manifestly St. Paul refers to this great conflict in the following language: "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."[6] The Apostle, though suddenly and miraculously converted, evidently knew nothing about "entire instantaneous sanctification!" But, like all other real Christians, had many a struggle, many a hard fought battle with sin and corruption, in his onward and upward march to glory. Hence he says: "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; But I keep under

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[1] Col. iii. 10. [2] 2 Peter iii. 18. [3] Rom. vii. 22. [4] Rom. vi. 6. [5] 2 Cor iv. 16. [6] Rom. vii. 21–25.

my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."[1] And after he had been a most laborious and faithful apostle and minister of the gospel for about *twenty-five* years, and had made vast attainments in the divine life, and had wonderful revelations from God, he still declares: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."[2] Paul never doubted for a moment of victory, grand, glorious, and complete; but as little did he think of giving up the contest. And this is the great life work of every regenerated Christian—even his *sanctification*—to weaken, root out, and utterly destroy the old sinful nature, sinful habits, lusts, passions, and desires; and to nourish, strengthen, and build up the new nature, the new born babe of Christ, in love, and faith, and holiness, in all good habits and Christian graces to absolute perfection, "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."[3] And all this under the tuition and moulding power of God's Spirit and grace.

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[1] 1 Cor. ix. 26–27. [2] Phil. iii. 12–14. [3] Eph. iv. 13.

And now by *what agency*, in *what manner*, and by *what means* is this work of sanctification carried on?

1. *It is the work of God's Holy Spirit.* The same divine agency by which we were *called*, *enlightened*, *convicted* of sin, and brought to *repentance*, and were *regenerated*, must be continued in every stage of this moral reformation until the end. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."[1]

"That the agent in our sanctification is the Spirit of God," says Dr. Dwight, "is a truth amply declared in the Scriptures. 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit.'[2] 'Elect,' says St. Peter, 'according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience.'[3] 'But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.'[4] The most extensive and complete account, however, which is given us of this subject in the Scriptures, is contained in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Here Christians are said, 'Not to walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit:' 'to be under the law of the Spirit of life:' 'to be after the Spirit:' 'to mind the things of the Spirit:' 'to be spiritually minded;' and thus to possess 'life and peace:' 'to have the Spirit dwelling in them:'

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[1] Phil. i. 6. [2] 2 Thess. ii. 13. [3] 1 Pet. i. 2. [4] 1 Cor. vi. 11.

'to be led by the Spirit;' which in them becomes 'the Spirit of adoption;' that is 'the Spirit' by which they 'are children of God, and cry unto him, Abba, Father:' 'to have the witness of the Spirit:' 'to have the first fruits of the Spirit:' 'to have the assistance of the Spirit in their prayers:' and, universally, to be under his guidance, and influence, through the whole Christian life."[1]

2. *It is effected through the means of grace.* The late Dr. S. S. Schmucker, whose definition of sanctification we have already quoted, gives the following concise and clear exposition of the subject, which we give in full. After having stated that it is the work of the Holy Spirit, effected through the means of grace, he says: "The Word, the sacraments, and all other means of grace, together with the dispensations of his providence, both prosperous and adverse, are the principal instruments by which the Parent of good advances the sanctification of the returning sinner. 'Sanctify them through thy truth, thy Word is truth.'[2] 'For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. For they (our earthly fathers) verily for a few days chasten us, after their own pleasure; but he (God) for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.'[3] Whilst the believer is living in the conscientious use of these means of grace, and is thus pursuing the path of duty, the benign and transforming

[1] Dwight's Theol., Vol. II., p. 518. [2] John xvii. 17. [3] Heb. xii. 10.

influence of the God of holiness is poured down upon him from on high."

3. "The *faithful believer* alone can be the subject of progressive change. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit wrought through the means of grace; but as soon as the believer becomes unfaithful to his God, he both neglects those means and grieves away that Spirit, and therefore inevitably interrupts this glorious work. Sanctification, moreover, consists in an increase of holy habits in the soul; and the strength of these habits is augmented or diminished by every individual act. To maintain, therefore, that sanctification is invariably progressive in the believer, even when he relapses into sin, amounts to the repulsive position that acts of sin confirm our holy habits."

"That the co-operation of the sinner, by the faithful use of the means of grace, is essentially necessary to the progress of this work, is also clearly taught in Scripture; where sanctification is, in this sense, even represented as the work of the believer himself. 'Dearly beloved,' says Paul to the Corinthians, 'let us *cleanse ourselves* from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness* in the fear of the Lord.'[1]

4. "This gracious change itself, as witnessed in the believer, consists in *increasing conformity to the law of God and ability to fulfill its requisitions.* The believer's *knowledge* of God and divine things is expanded by the habitual study of revealed truth; is

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 1.

corrected by being brought into contact with the infallible Word; is rendered more spiritual and vivid by the vouchsafed influence of the Holy Spirit. His *feelings* on the grand subject of salvation, on the character and interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, become more ardent and intense. No subject lies nearer to his heart than the glory of his God, his own eternal welfare, and that of his fellow-men. The Savior acquires increasing preciousness to his soul; he perceives in him the chief among ten thousand, one altogether lovely, and 'as the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth his soul after God.'[1] Accordingly, the tenor of his *actions*, too, evinces an increasing conformity to the divine law. His determination to live for eternity and God, acquires increasing strength and regularity, whilst he labors to lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset him, and run with alacrity the race set before him.[2]

"But as he advances in this process, he also finds his *strength* increasing. Before his clearer vision of eternal and divine things, the toys and baubles of this world dwindle into insignificance, and comparatively lose their tempting power. He finds himself strengthened with might in the inner man, and from a newborn babe he is gradually growing to the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ."[3]

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[1] Ps. xlii. 1. [2] Heb. xii. 1. [3] Popular Theology, pp. 161–163.

CHAPTER VIII.

ENTIRE INSTANTANEOUS SANCTIFICATION—A "HOLINESS CONVENTION."

A VIEW of Sanctification, differing from that just given in some important aspects, has been and is held and advocated by some Christians, to which we must now give attention. "Full Salvation," "Scriptural Holiness," "Christian Perfection," "Entire Sanctification," and such like phrases, are used to express this view. The doctrine is held by many persons, especially in the Methodist Church, and such other denominations as have, in the main, adopted the Methodist system and usages, that Christians can become *entirely sanctified* in the present life, and that, like justification, this is an *instantaneous* work of divine grace.

Perhaps I shall succeed best in bringing this subject fully and plainly before the mind of the reader, by giving an *actual case* that came under my own observation. Several years ago, during my ministry here in Washington, Illinois, I was invited to attend a meeting, held in the Methodist Episcopal Church

of this place, for the promotion of "Christian Holiness." The invitation was in printed form, and read as follow: "HOLINESS CONVENTION." "The undersigned, (ministers of the Central Illinois Conference,) affectionately invite all the children of God of every name, to whom this notice may come, and who desire to enjoy, and to assist in promulgating the experience of Christian Holiness, to meet in public convention in the M. E. Church;" (giving date and place of meeting, and then continuing in the following language): "There will be present during the whole time of the Convention efficient helpers, both of the ministry and laity, and it is hoped and believed that, with the blessing of Almighty God upon our humble efforts, the occasion will be one of unusual religious interest and profit. We urgently entreat that the interests of the Convention be remembered by all earnest Christians in their daily supplications at the Throne of Grace, that the divine blessing may attend our humble labors." This invitation was signed by *nine* ministers of the Gospel in the Methodist Episcopal Church, well-known in this part of the State.

"Holiness Convention!" Certainly to us, at the time, something new and unusual, and we really, at first, did not know what to make of it. We had heard and read of "conventions" hundreds of times —conventions held in Church and State, and for all sorts of purposes, good, bad, and indifferent, but never before had we heard of a *Holiness Convention*. We

had also read much that has been written on the subject of sanctification by different authors, including Fletcher, Dr. Adam Clarke, C. G. Finney, and others; but still the idea of holding a convention for the promotion of holiness had never entered into our mind.

Nor were we alone in our perplexity. Many honest minded people wondered, and inquired, "What does it mean?" "What kind of a convention is it?" But the convention met, continued its sessions for several days and nights, and then adjourned, and we all knew what was intended by it. It was a meeting for preaching, conference and prayer, all held in the interest of the doctrine of "Entire Instantaneous Sanctification," and for the purpose of promoting it among the people—to bring men to "enjoy, and to assist in promulgating the experience of Christian Holiness."

But now let us see what these *Christian* men mean by this (for Christian men they certainly were), as we are anxious to do them full justice, and get at their precise idea. And we remark, in the first place, that they do not mean *regeneration* or *conversion*—not that change or renewal of man's inner nature, by which he is brought "from darkness to light," the wickedness of "the carnal mind," and its enmity to God and his law, and the obstinacy of his will are subdued, and which is succeeded by supreme love to God, and love to our neighbor as to ourselves, and reformation of life. Not this do they mean, for their invitation was not at all to *sinners* and the *unconverted*, but to

"all the children of God of every name," and to "all earnest Christians," who have experienced the renewing power of God's grace—who have been justified by faith, and "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and who are "working out their own salvation with fear and trembling," in whom God "worketh, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."[1] These same good people and pious Christians must come and submit themselves to certain manipulations of "efficient helpers, both of the ministry and laity"—must be put through a certain process of "bodily exercise" in a machinery of human invention that they may get something else, a kind of *second* conversion, which they call holiness. These pious people know indeed that they are Christians, for "The Spirit itself beareth witness with their spirit, that they are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;"[2] but they must come to "the convention," must attend the meetings, sing and pray with all their might, and kneel at the mourners' bench, and seek, and struggle, and agonize "to *get* holiness;" and if they are sincere enough, earnest enough, and have faith enough, they will get it right there and then! Get *what*, we ask in the name of God and of all that is honest? Get holiness, to be sure, is the reply, for God will make them instantaneously and entirely holy, so that nothing of "the flesh" or of sin shall remain, but they shall be *per-*

[1] Phil. ii. 12, 13. [2] Rom. viii. 16, 17.

fect, and from this on shall live altogether without sin. But where is this taught in God's Word? We answer most emphatically nowhere, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation.

Nor do these men mean *justification by faith*, which all these "earnest Christians" had before; nor do they mean *a life of holiness;* for that cannot be lived in a few moments of excited and rapturous feelings. Then, honestly, what do they mean? The brethren of the "Holiness Convention" gave us the answer far more clearly and fully by what they *did*, than what they said, and left us in no doubt. They called a convention of Christian and, of course, converted people, men and women, ministers and laymen, who might "desire to ENJOY, and to assist in promulgating the EXPERIENCE of Christian Holiness." And now when these men and women have assembled in the house of God, they sing and pray, and preach and exhort, hour after hour, day and night, in the most excited and stirring manner—they give thrilling accounts of individual experience, and extensive and powerful revivals of religion; and now, as upon the ocean, tempest tossed, the waves of excitement begin to swell and roll, these converted members of the church, as I saw with my own eyes, are urged to gather around the altar of prayer, and to kneel side by side at the "mourner's bench." Some of these men and women have been followers of Christ for *fifty* years or more, and have grown gray in service of the Master, being very "pillars" in the church.—

I shall never forget especially one venerable father, whom I knew personally, of more than *seventy* years of age and a real corner-stone in their church, of high respectability and intelligence, of tall and commanding person, whose locks were white and silvery as the fallen snow, rising up and tottering to kneel at this altar, because his minister said it was his duty, and he would not stand in the way of any good that might be done to himself or others. And then, as they kneeled around that altar, the speaker urged them now to seek it most earnestly, and they should certainly find it—they wept, and groaned, and agonized in prayer, and the "helpers," clerical and lay, groaned and prayed with them—and then the leader said, "Let us sing on our knees;" and they sang on their knees, and he exhorted while they were on their knees—and then, after a good while, these souls were asked "to arise and testify;" that is tell whether or not the blessing sought, namely, *complete and instantaneous sanctification* had been obtained. Some said they were disappointed, having sought the blessing, but had not found it—others said they felt happy, but were not satisfied. One good sister, I remember, calmly and modestly spoke to the following effect: "I know that I love Jesus, and that my sins are all forgiven, and I feel happy, but I do not think that I am perfectly holy!" But the preacher exhorted them all to "hold on," and to persevere, and they would certainly obtain it.

In this *new* state, to which some of the preachers

claimed to have attained, they must go far beyond all their previous experience—not repentance, not conversion, not a change of heart, not a "new creature," old things having passed away and all things having become new—not faith and justification, not "peace with God," not "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"[1] —not the pure, spotless, *divine* righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith—not a life of piety and holiness, in which we "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us"[2]—not any or all of these, which true believers must have attained unto *before*; but something in *addition* to all these —over, above, and beyond them, called "perfect sanctification." No trace of man's original corrupt nature in the flesh, they say, must remain—nothing of "the old Adam," or "the old leaven"—no "remnants of sin"—no "roots of bitterness"—none of the workings, or motions, appetites or passions, of our former nature must henceforth appear, or exert any influence over us. For to admit that any of these re-appear at all in a man who is perfectly sanctified, is at once to give up the whole argument—since *such* a perfectly sanctified man could not be perfectly sanctified! Now we take it that this convention is a fair specimen of many similar meetings, held all over the country in these latter times, for a similar purpose;

[1] Rom. v. 5 [2] Heb. xii. 1.

and we take issue with these men—we object in toto both to their doctrine and practice as here exhibited. And we do this not in the spirit of controversy or uncharitableness; but with all soberness of mind, under the most full and clear conviction, that there is here grave error, and an amount of delusion and fanaticism truly lamentable, and most dangerous to the souls of men and the cause of true piety. We deny altogether that these people obtain any such thing as "complete holiness" or "entire sanctification" in this manner.

1. There is here, as it seems to us, *a great misapprehension and misapplication of the meaning of words.* "Perfect holiness" and "entire sanctification" are expressions which, if correctly used, must mean *absolute moral purity*—an entire absence of all sin in thoughts, words, feelings, motives, desires, and actions. "Applied to the Supreme Being," says Webster, "holiness denotes perfect purity or integrity of moral character, one of his essential attributes." "Applied to human beings, holiness is purity of heart or dispositions; sanctified affections; piety; moral goodness, but not perfect." This definition of the word alone settles the question. No human being is in himself, or can be, absolutely perfect in any thing, and of course not in holiness or moral goodness. It cannot be predicated of him, as he is in his very nature never so fully developed in any thing, that further improvement may not be made by him; that is, he is never so perfect or complete, that he

may not be made *more* so; or in other words he is not perfect. How can you say of any object or being that it is perfect, in the true sense, when it may be changed and made better? Only then is it *perfect*, when it is no longer capable of any change or improvement. Such is not man. He is not perfect in any work or attainment in matters of the world—not perfect in *knowledge* in any department—not in the arts and sciences—not as a mechanic, tradesman, manufacturer, or farmer—not in any of the professions, as a lawyer, physician, teacher, or a minister. Perfection does not belong to him. It is so in religion. His knowledge of God, Christ, redemption—of his own condition, wants, and destiny—of the Divine will, of time, death, and eternity, is all very imperfect. Says St. Paul: "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."[1] He is not perfect in his faith, love, and obedience. Not perfect in his repentance, confession, and even his most devout prayers. All his best and most holy exercises and services he himself feels and sees to be still very imperfect· how much more must God see them to be so?

And if he were or could be *perfect in holiness*, "entirely sanctified," we should have to ask, ought he still to *grow* and advance beyond this? Grow in holiness beyond *perfect* holiness?—advance in sanc-

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[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

tification beyond "*entire* sanctification?" And what would you call his *last* stage of advancement? How many kinds or degrees of *perfect* holiness or *entire* sanctification are there? Does not the claim involve a manifest absurdity? Or if a man is entirely sanctified, how much more sanctified can he become? Now either the man who, according to the teaching of these brethren, has obtained this great blessing of "entire instantaneous sanctification," can still grow and become more holy afterwards, or, having reached his *highest* stage, he cannot. If he can still advance, as the word of God teaches he must, then he has not attained "perfect holiness" or "entire sanctification;" but if not, then the doctrine is unscriptural and not true: take which horn of this dilemma you will. The Scriptures are plain on this subject: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."[1] "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."[2] "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."[3] "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and

[1] Ps. xcii. 12. [2] Prov. iv. 18. [3] 2 Pet. iii. 18.

is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."[1]

But we are told that these terms are not used in their *highest* sense—that it is not intended to assert that men are entirely sanctified and perfectly holy in the purest and most absolute sense, so as to leave no room for future advancement; but that the expressions are used in a *modified* sense, as synonymous with "full salvation," "complete Christian," "Christian holiness," and such like, and that the Bible speaks of our being *holy* and being *perfect* in this modified sense. Well then, let us abide by the Bible teaching in regard to this matter and all will be right. The Bible does not use expressions "perfect holiness" and "entire sanctification," applied to men, as these Methodist Christians do, nor does it teach their doctrine at all. But it does say: "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad."[2] "Why callest thou me good?" said Jesus to the young man who came to him; "there is none good but one, that is God."[3] "Not as though I had already attained," says Paul, "either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the

[1] Heb. xii. 1–2. [2] Ps. cxix. 96. [3] Matt. xix. 17.

mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."[1] "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."[2] Then I ask why do these people say, "*Perfect* holiness" and "*Entire* sanctification," if they do not mean what they say, and the Bible does not teach any such doctrine? And especially why do they hold meetings and "Conventions" for the attainment of something which they do not mean?—which does not exist, and in the very nature of the case never can exist? Is it not mockery and blasphemy in the sight of God? If after all, their men who possess *perfect* holiness are still *imperfect*, and those who enjoy *entire* sanctification are still very far from the highest possible attainment, and must, like other Christians, *advance* and grow in grace and purity, then it is clear that the argument is given up—terms have been most sadly misapplied, and a great many people misled and injured.

2. *We must insist upon it that holiness is not an ecstasy, a rapture, or a state of elevated and excited feelings or emotions at all.* It is not a swoon—not a state of spiritual intoxication—it is not a storm of nervous excitement into which the soul has been lashed by a noisy meeting, or the "bodily exercises" at a "mourner's bench." Such a storm must soon pass over, such excitement soon abate, and then where is your holiness? It is gone, and with it all such

[1] Phil. iii. 12–14. [2] 2 Peter iii. 18.

merely emotional religion. The soul sinks down into a state of gloom and despondency just as much below a proper and healthy standard, as it had arisen too high. The men who fancy that they have "experienced" holiness, and that they enjoy "entire sanctification," because they have been thus raised up into "the third heaven" of excitement, are themselves most sadly deceived, and in teaching it they deceive others to the great injury and undoing of their souls. Their evil passions and habits will not be thus suddenly all eradicated or subdued, nor good ones established, as they were led to believe, and they will begin to think that all religion is a sham. It has even passed into a proverb with some, "That the most unholy of all Christians are the perfectly holy, and the least sanctified are those entirely sanctified ones!" The truth simply is that holiness is not so much a thing to be *experienced* and *enjoyed*, as a thing to be *lived* and *practiced*. I do not place any confidence in your high excitement and ecstatic emotions—they may be all a delusion and change as the wind; but show me by your life—by your walk and conversation—that your heart has become pure; that your knowledge, your thoughts, understanding, reason, judgment, motives and will, as well as your feelings and affections, have become habitually holy, and I will most thankfully admit that you have made, and are making progress in sanctification.

3. *But the notion of "entire instantaneous sanctification" is altogether opposed to the Bible representation*

of the rise and progress of religion in the soul. This representation of God's Word is, not that the believer is suddenly and all at once complete; but it declares that "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."[1] There is first the morning star, giving hope of the coming day; then the early dawn of illumination; then the golden rays of the sun of righteousness bathe the new-born soul with their sweet light, and that sun now ascends the heavens of its spiritual and expanding vision higher and higher until the perfect day of full redemption. The blessed Redeemer says: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."[2] How inimitably beautiful is not this! So is religion in the soul. The man who fails to understand this must indeed be a dull scholar; and a wicked one must he be who would pervert it.

The Apostle Paul speaks of those who are "babes in Christ," and must be fed "with milk, and not with meat."[3] "For every one that useth milk, is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

[1] Prov. iv. 18. [2] Mark iv. 26–29. [3] 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."[1] But does it not require time and exercise for the babe to develop and grow to the full stature of manhood? And this is demanded of all Christians, that they should "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." But all this is utterly contrary to the idea of any sudden and instantaneous perfection to which, it is claimed, the Christian can attain.

4. *But the Bible, in plain language, positively and directly contradicts the idea of "sinless perfection" among men on earth.* Let us look at some of the most important passages of God's Word in which this is done. In his prayer at the dedication of the Temple, Solomon says: "For there is no man that sinneth not."[2] This is said in prayer, in a most solemn address unto God, and under the most solemn circumstances. And in Job, in the address of Eliphaz, we have this language: "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh in iniquity like water."[3] On this passage Albert Barnes in his Notes says: "What are all the pretensions of man to purity, when even the

[1] Heb. v. 13–14. [2] 1 Kings viii. 46. [3] Job. xv. 14–16.

angels are regarded as impure and the heavens unclean? * * God is so holy that all things else seem to be impure. The very heavens seem to be unclean when compared with him."

In the fourteenth Psalm we have this declaration: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."[1] Hear also the following passages: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"[2] "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not."[3] And the Apostle John says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."[4]

On this last passage the Commentator Scott remarks: "While the Apostle strenuously insisted on the necessity of an habitual holy walk, as the effect and evidence of the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, and of communion with him; he guarded with as much care against self-righteous pride, as against an Antinomian perversion of the gospel. If any professed Christians, while they seemed "to walk in the light," should be so elated with a conceit of their own attainments, as to say, "that they had no sin," but were perfectly pure, and as holy in heart and life as the law of God required; they were certainly deceived

[1] Ps. xiv. 2, 3. [2] Prov. xx. 9. [3] Eccl. viii. 20. [4] 1 John i. 8.

in a most awful manner; nay, they virtually denied the truth of the whole gospel, which everywhere speaks of men as sinners; so that the Word of God was not in them, by faith, or by the teaching of the Holy Spirit."

5. *We read of no absolutely perfect saints in the Bible who "experienced" and "enjoyed" "entire instantaneous sanctification."* Not in the Old Testament and not in the New.

Not *Enoch*, who "walked with God, and was not, for God took him;"[1] for his, manifestly, was a LIFE of holiness continued over three hundred years, during which, like other good men, "he begat sons and daughters," as the father and head of a family. And Paul says of him: "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."[2] Doubtless he had attained to a *high degree* of Christian holiness, but it was the work of a long life of faith, piety, and prayer.

Not *Job;* for though the Lord had said of him, "that he was a man perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil;"[3] it was a life of uprightness and piety, and not a sudden, instantaneous experience. And Job did not, by any means, regard himself as perfect or morally pure when he said to the Lord: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer

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[1] Gen. v. 24. [2] Heb. xi. 5. [3] Job i. 1.

thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." * * And again he says: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."[1]

Not *David;* for though he has been called "the man after God's own heart," yet, in an evil hour, he fell into great sins, and in his subsequent deep repentance he says: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me;" and he earnestly prays: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."[2] And afterwards he says: "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad."[3]

Not *Paul;* who, on his way to Damascus, had seen Jesus, and heard his voice, and was miraculously converted and called to the apostleship, and to the work of writing a large portion of the New Testament: who, besides, had an abundance of revelations —who was caught up into the third heavens, where he saw and heard things that were unutterable: yet he, after he had great experience as a Christian, made vast attainments in knowledge and grace, had suffered, and toiled, and labored almost beyond measure as a preacher and an apostle of Jesus Christ for more than *twenty-five years*, and had ascended so high up on the mount of holiness, that its glory-gilded summit was visible to him, and the music of the eternal world

[1] Job xl. 4, *et* xlii. 5, 6. [2] Ps. li. 5–10. [3] Ps. cxix. 96.

began to thrill his soul:—yet even now he turns to us and says: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."[1]

Not *John*, the heavenly minded and Christ-like John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved, which also leaned on his breast at supper,"[2] not even he claims anything like "perfect holiness," or "entire instantaneous sanctification;" but, as we have seen, says positively: "If we say that we have no sin (if WE say, including himself) we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."[3] The truth evidently is, that the best and holiest men and women feel least as if they were perfectly holy, or had attained to entire sanctification. As they ascend higher and higher on the mount of holiness—come nearer to God and to heaven—so does their spiritual vision become more keen and far reaching, and they detect a thousand sins and imperfections in themselves, where they saw none before, and which the less enlightened never discover; and the infinite purity and glory of the great JEHOVAH becomes so overwhelming to them,

[1] Phil. iii. 12–14. [2] John xxi. 20. [3] John i. 8.

that every thought of their own goodness or perfection utterly fades away, and Christ and his divinely perfect righteousness, with which his free grace has clothed them, becomes "all, and in all." I see a streak of dust in my room along the line marked by the rays of the sun falling into it through my window, while the rest of the apartment seems perfectly clean; but I know that it is not because there is more dust where the sun shines, for that is not so, but because there is more LIGHT there. When there is but little light in my soul I may fancy perfection; but when, by a real advancement in divine knowledge and holiness, my spiritual light is increased and my vision improved, I cannot bear even to look upon myself, but I am compelled to say with Job: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth."

CHAPTER IX.

THE UNION OF THE BELIEVING SOUL WITH CHRIST.

VARIOUS ideas and theories prevail in regard to the nature of personal religion, or the Christian life. With some it is a *mere form*, a name or profession. They know nothing of inward or heart piety —of repentance, faith, conversion, or the life of godliness in the soul. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."[1] "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."[2]

With others it is purely a *thing of ordinances*. They suppose indeed that there is a power in religion, but that power is in the church, the sacraments, the ministry, and the ceremonies and services of divine worship. The ordinances are regarded as possessing some magic or mystical influence in themselves, some *opus operatum*, by which sins are taken away, and men become pleasing to God. The ordinances are put in the place of Christ—are made the *end* instead of the means—and are therefore magnified to the heavens, and their use is depended upon for salvation. Nor is it the Roman Catholics alone who have

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 5. [2] Rev. iii. 1.

fallen into this fatal error; but many Protestants also in practice, if not in theory. Alas! for such poor souls, who make the Church and her external ordinances their Savior, and set aside Christ! They are as much mistaken as those who fancy that the outward act of coming to a "mourners' bench," and there going through a certain process of "bodily exercise," constitutes conversion—making a Savior out of the bench.

With others still, religion consists entirely of *impulses*, *emotions*, and *excitement* of the feelings. They make little account of instruction, knowledge, faith, and a holy life, if they only "feel good in meeting!" They want "rousing preaching," "stirring singing," and "lively meetings," all the time, and with such, excitement is religion. Out of this, it is clear, has grown the idea of "entire instantaneous sanctification," presented in the previous chapter.

Now what is the TRUTH in regard to this most important subject? What is true religion, subjectively considered, or as a matter of experience in the heart and life of the individual believer? I answer that the *Lutheran Church* has here, as elsewhere, the true doctrine, however much many who bear her name may have misapprehended or come short of it. It is clearly developed and set forth in the practical writings and hymns of our most eminent and holy men, from Luther down to the present day. True religion is not a mere form, nor merely a thing of ordinances, on the one hand; nor does it consist simply in emo-

tions and feelings on the other. There is no such thing as a "second conversion," or twenty conversions, or "entire instantaneous sanctification," every time that the heart and life are renewedly dedicated to God. But there is such a thing as repentance of sin, "a total change of heart and mind,"[1] justification by faith, "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"[2] and "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."[3] There is a state of which it can be said: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."[4] True religion is a *divine life* and power in the soul, moulding and fashioning it into the image of God; it is Christ living and reigning in the soul supremely and without a rival; it is a vital union between Christ and the regenerated, believing soul, like the union of the branches with the vine, so that the spiritual life of Christ penetrates and permeates its every power and faculty, so that the true Christian becomes Christ-like, and subject to Christ in all things, and so that he can say with Paul: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, BUT CHRIST LIVETH IN ME: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."[5]

Let us now examine this subject in the light of the Scriptures and of Christian experience.

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[1] Catechism, p. 33. [2] Rom. v. 1. [3] Rom. v. 5. [4] Rom. viii. 1. [5] Gal. ii. 20.

First, *the Nature of this Union.*

And I remark, at the outset, that it does not consist of a mere *profession of religion*, or connection with the Church. This is indeed necessary, but it is not of itself enough, since there may be unfruitful, or even dead, branches in the living vine. There is an *external* and an *internal* union with Christ. By Baptism, even without faith, we are united with the visible church as the body of Christ, and by the use of the means of grace, even in a merely formal manner, this outward union is kept up; but without true faith and an inward soul union with Jesus, the man "is dead while he liveth."

Nor is it, secondly, a mere union of *will, interest, aim, friendship* and *love* with Christ. It *is* this, but it is also much more. Most writers on practical piety do not go beyond this, and hence, in my judgment, fail, just in so far, from coming up to the full truth. They teach that when we are converted to God, we trust in Christ by faith for salvation, submit our wills to him, and are united to him in our affections, interests, and purposes, and therefore "we have peace with God." But they stop just here. They have nothing more vital or deep, giving us only these shallow streams of practical piety. As a general thing it is only among *German* writers of real faith, and those who have borrowed from them, that we find the deep waters of a "Higher Christian Life." The great and good Albert Barnes may be taken as a fair specimen of English authors on this subject.

In his comments on the beautiful allegory of the "Vine and the branches," in the fifteenth chapter of John, we have the following language: "It is a union formed by believing on Christ; resulting from our feeling our dependence upon him; our need of him; and from embracing him as our Savior, Redeemer and Friend. We become united to him in all our interests, and have common feelings, common desires, and a common destiny with him. We seek the same objects; are willing to encounter the same trials, contempt, persecution and want; and are desirous that *his* God shall be ours, and his eternal abode ours. It is a union of friendship, of love, and of dependence; a union of weakness with strength; of imperfection with perfection; of a dying nature with a living Savior; of a lost sinner with an unchanging Friend and Redeemer. It is the most tender and interesting of all relations."

Now, what Mr. Barnes here says is true, every word of it; but it is far from being *all* the truth. He himself seems to be reaching out after something more, but does not lay hold of it, nor bring it to light. And just here, as it seems to me, is the great defect of our American practical Theology. It is *superficial* and light, not going down into the deep mines of that living and powerful faith where Luther, and after him Arndt, Spener, Francke, and of all their school, gathered their most precious treasures. Gold is not found upon the surface, but must be dug out of the depths of the earth.

What then is the *real nature* of this union of the believing soul with Christ?—What is this deeper experience in the divine life?—this more substantial and solid piety, and richer and more glorious inheritance? Let us learn it from Christ himself, in his illustration of "the vine and the branches." Read the account of it in the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of John. How are the branches united to the vine in nature? Is it not a real, living connection?—so that if it be broken, the branch dies for the want of it? Does not the life, the sap, which is in the vine, really pass up into the branches, just like the blood flows out from the heart into every part of the system, and causes them to grow and bring forth fruit? The question simply is: Does not the vine communicate its *own life* to the branch, and really live, flourish and bear fruit in the branch? Can we possibly, in all truth and honesty, make less of it? Is not the connection also *mutual*, as well as real and vital?—that is, if the vine lives in the branches, do not the branches also live in the vine? Hear Jesus: "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." The soul of the believer is united to the Lord in such manner that the spiritual life—the spiritual vitality and power of Jesus is really and truly imparted to it, as certainly as the life of the vine is in the branch, to give it life and to make it fruitful. There is really a *oneness* of spiritual life with their Savior, in all those who truly be-

lieve. And, as we have seen, the union is mutual. It is Christ in the soul, and the soul in Christ. "Abide in me and I in you." Christ is in the soul to *give*, and the soul in Christ to *receive*, "all in all." So St. Augustine: "The branches are in the vine, not so as to impart anything to it, but so as to derive their life from it; the vine is in the branches in such a way as to minister to them the vital aliment, not in such a way as to receive it from them."[1] St. Paul says: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."[2] On this passage Luther says: "There is then a double life. The first is mine, which is natural; the second is the life of another, that is to say, the life of Christ in me. As touching my natural life I am dead, and now I live another life. I live not now as *Paul*, for Paul is dead. Who is it then that liveth? It is the Christian. Paul, therefore, as he liveth in himself, is wholly dead through the law; but as he liveth in Christ, or rather as Christ liveth in him, he liveth by another life: for Christ speaketh in him, liveth in him, and exerciseth all the operations of life in him."[3]

Tholuck, in his Commentary on the Gospel of John, already quoted, says in his remarks on the fifteenth chapter: "The natural relation between the vine and its branches, shooting forth in all the glories of their noble fruit, is realized, in its most perfect sense, in

[1] Krauth's Tholuck on John, p. 345. [2] Gal. ii. 20. [3] Luther's Com. Gal. in loc.

the spiritual relations between Christ and those that are his. That which Paul says of the mystical unity of the Redeemer with his Church, has found its most beautiful expression in this passage of John; it is impossible here to be mistaken, in referring this discourse to a higher relation than that which subsists between teacher and pupil in general; it speaks of an essential unity mediated through faith. The drapery is not that of the parable; it is no event in his history, but a relation in the world of nature, which is spoken of; and this is employed from the commencement, to express a spiritual relation, so that the literal and figurative meaning run over into each other." The great Commentator, Olshausen, has the following remarks on this same passage: "But the fundamental idea that lies at the bottom of the whole comparison is this: the intimacy of the union between Christ and his people is as great as if one life, one blood, flowed through them all; and this very union is the only condition under which true fruits can be borne. In the same sense Paul compares all believers to an organic body, in which Christ is the head, and the several believers are the members. * * Every physical vital unity of which the vine forms an example, is, as it were, a copy of the spiritual vital unity of believers with Christ; accordingly this is, in the full sense of the word, a *living spiritual growth.*"

Let us refer to several other authorities, whose Lutheran character will not be questioned. Thus Schmid, in his Doctrinal Theology, under the head

of the *Mystical Union*, has the following: "The sacred Scriptures declare of the believer, 'that God dwelleth in him,'[1] and thereby indicate a special union of God with him, which, in Dogmatic Theology, has been designated Mystical Union—*unio mystica*. This takes place the moment in which a man is justified and 'born again,' and is placed inseparably with justification and regeneration; so that, if forgiveness of sins is put with justification, and ability of the will with regeneration, in this mystical union the immediate operations of both these acts of grace are described, which consists in this, that God now dwells in a peculiar manner in this justified and regenerated soul. In this mystical union there is more expressed than a mere agreement of the human with the Divine will, or a mere union in love, or the mere internal operations and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Look at the following passages of God's Word: 'Jesus answered and said unto him, If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, *and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*'[2] 'Know ye not, that your bodies are the members of Christ? * * But he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.'[3] 'For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.'[4] 'That ye might be partakers of the divine nature.'[5] 'For I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live;

[1] 1 John iv. 15. [2] John xiv. 23. [3] 1 Cor. vi. 15, 17. [4] Eph. v. 30. [5] 2 Pet. i. 4.

yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'[1] These passages show much more, that this union is not to be understood metaphorically merely, but truly and really, so that it cannot be otherwise described than as a union of the substance of God with the substance of man, in consequence of which he pours out upon the regenerated soul the fullness of his gifts of grace."[2]

God is the source and fountain of *all* life, even in its lower form in the animal and vegetable world, and eminently in its higher grade of spiritual and immortal beings. And as he is a Spirit, and has originally all spiritual life in himself, so he communicates it to the soul or spirit of the believer. And this is not a mere figure of speech, but a blessed and glorious reality. "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."[3] "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."[4] "Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."[5] So also St. Paul says: "Even when we were dead in sins, God hath quickened us together with Christ."[6]

Where this union has been formed, Christ has

[1] Gal. ii. 19–20. [2] Schmid's Dogmatik, p. 374. [3] John v. 26. [4] John ix. 25, 26. [5] John xiv. 20, 21. [6] Eph. ii. 5.

been received by the soul as "all in all"—that is, has been received as he is offered, in all his fullness, with all that he is and has—all for light, wisdom, pardon, life, sanctification, and free, perfect, glorious redemption. With us poor sinners there is an utter destitution of all good—utter emptiness, helplessness, vileness, guilt, condemnation and death; but in Christ there are infinite riches, power, fullness, holiness and grace, and they all become ours by faith. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."[1] Could God do more than give us ALL THINGS? O, for faith to receive what Christ is able and willing to give! "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's: and Christ is God's."[2] Deep self-abasement, utter self-abhorrence, fills the soul of the true believer as, on the one hand, he looks at himself; but on the other, just as profound a sense of the all-sufficiency of Christ:—that he really has no wants, and can have none, for time and eternity, which are not supplied in him. O, the immeasurable fullness and glory of that redemption which Christ has wrought out for us! There is experienced in the soul such a sense of the love of Jesus as completely overwhelms and subdues us, and we now see the full meaning of Paul when he says:

[1] Rom. viii. [2] 1 Cor. iii. 20–23.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."[1] "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."[2]

Christ is the Bridegroom, and the believing soul is the bride, and a true spiritual marriage now takes place. As in a true marriage there is not merely an external union, and a mutual pledge of love, but also a union of two willing souls—the bride gives not merely her love and confidence to her husband, but gives *herself*, and the true husband gives *himself* to his wife, so the soul gives herself to Christ, and Christ gives himself, with all that he is and has, to the soul.

The soul is the clay and Christ the potter, who moulds and fashions it into his own glorious image of beauty, purity, and love, and interpenetrates its every power and faculty with his own life. The soul is now opened as a mirror to the light of God—as a crystal fount from which the divine perfections are reflected in all their beauty and sweetness. The soul is the silver plate on which the Almighty Artist fixes and fastens his own divine likeness. O, what a grand union is this! My soul, art thou thus united to thy

[1] Rom. viii. 33, 34. [2] 1 Cor. i. 30.

Lord? Ah, Lord, *abide* in me, that I also may abide in thee!

But, secondly, *How are we to become thus united to Christ?*

It is evident that in our *natural state* no such union exists, for we "were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."[1] We are branches of "a wild olive tree," and must be "broken off" from this sinful tree of nature, and be "grafted into"[2] Christ, "the true vine," before we can have any real connection with him, or be made partakers of the divine nature. But the great question is, *How is this accomplished?*

We reply that *three* things are essential: 1. A proper *knowledge* of ourselves and of Christ. 2. A proper *denial of self*. 3. A proper *reception of Christ*.

First, we cannot become true Christians, nor be united to Christ, without a correct knowledge both of ourselves and of the blessed Savior. "Know thyself," was a maxim written upon an ancient heathen temple, but should be much rather written upon the heart and conscience of every Christian. Know what? Know thy sinfulness, corruption, guilt, danger, and utter ruin. Know thy ignorance, blindness, weakness, and that thou art without help and without

[1] Eph. ii. 3, 12. [2] Rom. xi. 17.

hope unless thou hast an Almighty Savior. Know this from the word of God, from "the holy commandments which thou hast not kept," from the convictions of the Divine Spirit, and from thine own consciousness.

But you must also know Christ properly. Know that God has given him not only *for* thee, but also *to* thee, if thou wilt have him, to be to thee all that thou needest now, or canst need forever! "Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." You are in ignorance and darkness, but Christ shall give you light. You are dead "in trespasses and sins"—utterly lost and ruined; but in him you are made alive and have peace and pardon—yes, rest, hope, joy, and eternal salvation. All this is yours NOW, and what it shall be hereafter we cannot as yet fully comprehend. "Beloved," says the Apostle, "now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."[1] I say, that as a true believer you have Christ and full salvation now, if you will receive him as he is offered to you. "According to your faith be it unto you."[2] Know all this and consider it well.

But, secondly, there must also be an entire *denial of self.* No man can have Christ and yet cling to himself. No, never! "If any man will come after

[1] 1 John iii. 2. [2] Matt. ix. 29.

me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me,"[1] is the language of the Master. Deny what? "Let him deny HIMSELF," in all that is sinful in word and deed—in thought, feeling, motive, and desire. Deny all sins, great and small, open and secret, sins of commission and omission, and that always and forever. Deny himself in regard to *the world*, in all its ways, fashions and amusements, just in so far as they are sinful, or lead the soul away from Christ. "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."[2]

Deny the *devil*, and all his works and ways, so that you may not be in his power, "taken captive by him at his will,"[3] and be not a partaker with his unhappy children.

But a proper self-denial implies much more still. What? Deny your own proud reason, opinions, will, ways, and desires. Be nothing, boast of nothing, trust in nothing, glory in nothing "save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto you, and you unto the world."[4] Your own reason is perverted, utterly blind in spiritual things, conceited and selfish withal, and has nothing aright until light from Christ shine upon it. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him:

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[1] Matt. xvi. 24. [2] Rom. xii. 2. [3] 2 Tim. ii. 26. [4] Gal. vi. 14.

neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,"[1] Your own will, ways and desires are all sinful and incline to that which is evil, and delight in it as a matter of course. Therefore you must give up self entirely, and become humble and teachable as a child. "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."[2]

Yea, more: deny your own goodness, merits, righteousness, and works; all that you have and are; for they are all as "filthy rags," and worth nothing without Christ. All that is your own can never justify you in the sight of God, nor sanctify you after you are justified. Otherwise you might be your own Savior, and have no need of the Lord Jesus.

And this leads us to remark, in the third place, that we cannot become united to Christ, *until we cordially receive him in all his fullness.* We must receive him as he is offered to us, not as *half* a Savior, or for one thing only; but as a full Savior and for all things; and this reception is by faith, as we have heretofore abundantly shown. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."[3] "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."[4] "But Christ is all, and

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 14. [2] Matt. xviii. 3. [3] John iii. 36. [4] 2 Cor. viii. 9.

in all."[1] "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." * * * "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are COMPLETE in him, who is the head of all principality and power."[2] "And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace."[3] But we need not multiply passages, since the whole Bible is full of this subject. In Christ all our wants are met. We have enough in him, and never need any thing more. But we must receive him fully and in all his fullness. On our part it is *receive, receive*, all the time—accept, accept; not give, not add anything, not do anything to make ourselves fit first and acceptable: and on Christ's part it is *give, give*, always of his own abounding and inexhaustible fullness.

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
O, Lamb of God, I come, I come!

"Just as I am—and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

"Just as I am—though toss'd about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings within and fears without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

"Just as I am—poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

[1] Col. iii. 11. [2] Col. i. 19 and ii. 9, 10. [3] John i. 16.

"Just as I am—thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

"Just as I am—thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!"

How is this union to be maintained? It is just as important and necessary that our union with Christ should be *continued*, as that it should be formed. For, says Jesus, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."[1] That is, just as a branch, broken or cut off from the vine, cannot live, but must wither and die, and is fit only for fuel; so the soul, separated from Christ, can have no spiritual life, and can bring forth no fruit, but is fit only for destruction. So it is declared of the tree that does not bring forth good fruit: "And now also the axe is laid at the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."[2] It is worthy of notice, that in ten short verses, in the allegory of the vine and the branches, in the fifteenth chapter of John, Jesus uses the word "abide" *nine* times, thus indicating the great importance of the subject.

First, this abiding is *mutual*. We are to abide in Christ, and Christ in us. "Abide in me, and I in

[1] John xv. 6. [2] Matt. iii. 10.

you." As we have seen in regard to the union itself, so it is also in regard to its *continuance*. The one demands the other. I cannot abide in Christ unless he also abide in me; and he will not abide in me unless I also abide in him. But I know also that he is faithful, and will never leave the soul that clings to him. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? —shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? * * Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."[1]

> "The soul that on Jesus hath lean'd for repose,
> I will not, I cannot desert to his foes:
> That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
> I'll never—no never—no, never forsake."

At the same time all *self-dependence* is here entirely cut off. No man has any sufficiency in himself for this, or anything else that is good. As "I cannot believe in, or come to Jesus Christ, my Lord, merely by my own reason or other natural powers," so neither can I *abide* in him without his constant aid. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: FOR WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING."

[1] Rom. viii. 35, 37–39.

And this, secondly, suggests one of the means of abiding in Christ, which is a *constant denial of ourselves and our own righteousness*. Just as we emptied ourselves of all self, when we first came to Christ, so we must continue to do daily in order to abide in him. The moment that self comes in, Jesus is thrust out, and we are as branches broken off. The Lord threatened to reject the Laodicean church, when she began to say, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," and told her, "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."[1]

And, thirdly, as there must be a constant denial of self, on the one hand, so there must be *a constant clinging to Christ and dependence upon him*, on the other. The branch can never bear separation from the vine. We are never strong enough to let go of Jesus, and walk alone—no, not for a moment. That man will not be carried safely across the stream who enters the boat, but leaves it again before he is landed on the opposite shore. It is the very essence of true faith to *continue* to hold on to Christ, and ever to grasp him more firmly. As the oak grows, raising

[1] Rev. iii. 17, 18.

its top heavenwards and spreading wide its branches, so also its roots must strike deeper into the earth and obtain a stronger hold there, or the passing storm will quickly lay it prostrate. The little vine, just commencing to ascend the tree, may be held fast by a few small tendrils; but as it continues to grow and ascend up and up, it must wind itself round and round that tree many times, and clasp it with a thousand hands to support itself and prevent the blast of winter from tearing it away. Such a great tree is my Savior, and such a vine is my soul clasping him ever more closely.

"Oh, for a faith that will not shrink,
Though press'd by ev'ry foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe!

"That will not murmur nor complain
Beneath the chast'ning rod,
But in the hour of grief or pain,
Will lean upon its God;—

"A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt;—

"That bears unmoved the world's dread frown,
Nor heeds its scornful smile;
That seas of trouble cannot drown,
Nor Satan's arts beguile;—

"A faith that keeps the narrow way
Till life's last hour is fled,
And with a pure and heavenly ray
Lights up a dying bed.

"Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en here, the hallow'd bliss
Of an eternal home."

And, finally, we are to continue in the love of Jesus, and abide in union with him, *by a proper and faithful use of the means of grace*. Not in this way to merit or deserve his grace and this blessed union with him; but because in his ordinances and by their use as means he gives himself to the believing soul. It is his *real presence* in the word, the gospel, prayer and the sacraments, that gives them their value and power; otherwise they must be empty and hollow. They have nothing in themselves to satisfy the wants of the soul, or raise it up to God. A poor religion, indeed, has that man who has only the dry husks of ordinances and finds no Christ in them. He has entirely misapprehended the whole subject. But still more mistaken, if possible, is the man who rejects the ordinances, and who expects to find Christ, and grow in grace without the use of God's appointed means. As it is not outside of the church and her ordinances, and without the word of God, that men are converted and the Holy Spirit "works faith" in their hearts and unites them to Christ, but by the use of these means, so they cannot "abide" in him without their constant and faithful use. It is to those in the house of the Lord that the precious promise is given: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those

that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing."[1] "If a man love me," says Jesus, "*he will keep my words:* and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."[2]

SOME OF THE BLESSED RESULTS OF THIS UNION.

First, *such a soul will become Christ-like*—will be transformed into the image of the Savior. The branch into which the life of the vine flows must become like the vine. This is the doctrine of the Scriptures: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be *conformed to the image of his Son*."[3] "But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Sprit of the Lord."[4] "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."[5] "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."[6] This gradual assimilation of the soul to Christ is more than *sanctification*—it includes also the idea of advancement or growth in knowledge, faith, love, humility, patience, meek-

[1] Ps. xcii. 12–14. [2] John xiv. 23. [3] Rom. viii. 29. [4] 2 Cor. iii. 18. [5] Rom. vi. 6. [6] Eph. iv. 22–24.

ness, and every Christian grace and virtue in which it is possible for us to become like our Savior. Paul would have us advance, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."[1] "That we may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head even Christ." And Peter says: "Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."[2] "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."[3] All this, and everything that we understand by growth in grace, takes place in consequence of our union with Christ.

This process of becoming Christ-like, the "Form of Concord" calls "Renovation" and "Sanctification" —"a benefaction from the Mediator, Christ, and a work of the Holy Spirit." "Faith is first enkindled in us by the Holy Spirit in conversion, through the hearing of the gospel; and this faith apprehends the grace of God in Christ, through which the individual is justified. Afterwards, when the person is justified, he is then also renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. And from this renovation and sanctification a succession of good works follows."[4] And Melanchthon has the following: "But when we speak of faith,

[1] Eph. iv. 13–15. [2] 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. [3] 1 Pet. iii. 18. [4] Form of Con., p. 546.

which is not an idle fancy, but such a new light, life, and power in the heart, as renews the heart and mind and courage—makes of us another man and a new creature, viz: a new light and work of the Holy Ghost —then every man understands, that we do not speak of such a faith as stands side by side with fatal sin, as our adversaries speak of faith. For how should light and darkness exist together? For true faith, wherever it exists, bears good fruit."[1] Such a man will, therefore, because of his faith and his union with Christ, constantly become more and more like his Savior in all things. He will have the mind of Christ, as the apostle says: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."[2] And as Christ was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners,"[3] so must we become more and more like him.

A second result of this union of the soul with Christ is *great spiritual power.* That is a remarkable saying of Christ, already several times referred to "For without me, ye can do nothing!" And St. Paul, says: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."[4]

The effects of the fall and of sin have been such as to deprive man entirely of the spiritual power necessary to his own recovery and restoration to holiness, if left to himself. Hence in Luther's expla-

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[1] Apology, p. 81. [2] Phil. ii. 5. [3] Heb. vii. 26. [4] 2 Cor. iii. 5.

nation of the third article of the *Creed*, we have the following: "I believe that I cannot merely by my own reason, or other natural powers, believe in or come to Jesus Christ, my Lord." As man came originally from the hands of his Maker, "His understanding had a heavenly knowledge of God and his will," and man's "will had a divine power to love and to do that which is good, and to hate and avoid evil." But all this was lost in the fall: for "The fall of Adam consisted in this, that man alienated his heart from God to the devil, and soul and body became unfit for anything good, and prepared for, and inclined to evil." [1]

But from this sad state believers are restored by Christ, for "Faith restores the image of God in us, so that we can rule over our sins and live holy." [2] In him we have not only *pardon* of sin and freedom from *condemnation*, but also spiritual power, so that we can say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." [3] Here is just where thousands fail. They depend upon themselves, or seek strength elsewhere than in the "Rock of Ages." But no man can be a Christian, or lead a good and holy life, separated from Christ, or looking away to other sources of help. He has not the power to do it. His spiritual enemies are too many and too mighty for him. "The world, the flesh, and the devil" will conquer all the time. "The lust of the

[1] Catechism, pp. 24, 26. [2] Do., p. 31. [3] Phil. iv. 13.

flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,"[1] and all the evil passions will assert their right to reign in spite of us. No matter how often we seem to get them under our feet, they will soon rise again. The power of victory must come to us from Jesus, as he has overcome all our spiritual enemies for us. Hear what he says: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."[2] "For the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."[3] "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."[4] "The prince of this world is judged."[5] "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."[6] And this is also the testimony of the Holy Spirit speaking by the Apostles. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us."[7] "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."[8] "For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God."[9]

Hence we see that Christ has obtained great victories for us, and they become ours by faith. It is not only by faith that we *come* to Christ, and *lay hold* of

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[1] 1 John ii. 16. [2] John xii. 31. [3] John xiv. 30. [4] Luke x. 18 [5] John xvi. 11. [6] John xvi. 33. [7] Rom. viii. 37. [8] John iv. 4 [9] John v. 4, 5.

him, and *continue* to hold on to him; but by faith also that we *draw from him* the power and grace to overcome all our enemies. Nor is this all. This power obtained from Christ is not merely *negative* in its character, to enable us to stand on the *defensive*, and successfully to resist the attacks of our foes, and overcome all our temptations; but also to enable us to carry on a mighty *offensive* warfare for Christ and his cause—to fit us for *positive* and *aggressive* work in all departments of the Savior's kingdom. And it is evident also that our strength will be in proportion to our faith. Weak faith will have, comparatively, little power; but strong faith will have great power with God and prevail—and the stronger the faith, the greater the power. If therefore Jesus could say, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed" (a small seed representing small faith), ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." What may we not affirm of strong faith? Clearly that "all things are possible with God." 'And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."[1] We have heard it said, "That prayer moves the arm that moves the universe!" But this is calculated to make a very erroneous impression—correctly speaking, prayer does no such thing, but FAITH does. Prayer without faith is but idle breath vainly spent. We are not heard for "our

[1] Matt. xxi. 22.

much speaking," nor for our long speaking, or loud and earnest speaking; but "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, BELIEVE that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."[1] Prayer is only the mouth-piece of faith—the language in which faith expresses her desires. It is never great prayer which obtains anything, but great faith which uttered the prayer. It is this that gave Paul and the martyrs of the ancient church their power of endurance and sufferings for Christ, and successful labors and efforts in his cause; and so of the saints who became eminent in all ages and lands. So it is now and always must be. No man can become eminent in holiness and in power with God except in union with Christ by a great and mighty faith.

Another of the blessed results of the soul's union with Christ is *an abundance of good fruits*. Jesus says: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." The *life* of the branch depends upon its union with the vine, as does our spiritual life upon our union with Christ. And it is of course the first great thing, with Christians, that they should have spiritual life—that it can be said of them: "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."[2] As we have seen, they must be Christ-like, Christ in them and they in him, and have a true and living faith, "Cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, per-

[1] Mark xi. 24. [2] Eph. ii. 1.

fecting holiness in the fear of God."[1] They must have an internal vigorous spiritual life of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,"[2] and all the Christian graces and virtues. But still this is not enough. Our religion, however beautiful and good, is not to be wrapped up in ourselves—and the less so, the more beautiful and good it is. Not a light "put under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light unto all that are in the house."[3] A fountain in the soul that does not retain all its sweet waters within itself, but from which they generously and copiously flow out for the good of others. From a branch on a good and flourishing vine we expect more than leaves and blossoms, and a show of a vigorous and healthy life —we look for FRUIT. "And every branch in me," says Jesus, "that beareth not fruit, he taketh away." Now, of course, internal graces are also "fruits of the Spirit," and the result of Christ's indwelling in the soul; but there will be also the external fruits of good works—or doing good in the world. Such a man, like Jesus himself, will desire the salvation and happiness of the whole human race, and is willing to spend and be spent for its accomplishment. He will consider himself and all that he has as belonging to Christ, and will lay his hand to every good work. No self-denial will be too great, no suffering too severe, and no gift too expensive in the cause of the

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 1. [2] Gal. v. 22, 23. [3] Matt. v. 15.

blessed Master. The love of Christ will constrain him, and he will consider himself as personally addressed when Christ says: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;"[1] and, whether minister or layman, he will find ways and means of doing, and aiding to do, this great work.

The last result of this union of the soul with Christ, which I shall mention, *is peace with God—pure and permanent happiness—sweet and heavenly joy*. And it is the only real and lasting happiness to which men can attain in this life. All that the world calls happiness is either unreal or delusive, or at best uncertain and of short duration—often followed by pain and suffering far greater than was the temporary enjoyment. It is impossible that there should be true and permanent happiness except in peace of mind in the conscious favor of God. God is the fountain from which all real enjoyment must flow into the soul, and separated from him it must be unhappy forever. But united to Christ, and reconciled to God through him, there is unending peace and joy. In such a soul all *opposition* to God and his will has forever ceased. The enmity of the "carnal mind" is entirely destroyed, and there is full and complete *submission* of ourselves, with all that we have and are, to God—the whole soul is drawn out supremely and entirely to yield itself up to the will of God, as St. Paul says: "That ye present your

[1] Mark xvi. 15.

bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."[1] We have no longer a will of our own contrary to that of God, but all our wishes, desires, aims and hopes are in accord with his. In him, in the highest and best sense, "We live, and move, and have our being,"[2] and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God."[3] We no longer choose our own way, but have submitted to be led, governed and guided by him, and our constant prayer is: "Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?"

All our sins are forgiven, and "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Not only peace with God, but also peace of *conscience*. It has no guilty stings to torment us, for it has been purified by the blood of Christ: "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience."[4] "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."[5] *All slavish fear is gone*, and we feel a sweet confidence in God as our dear Father in heaven, as Luther says in explanation of the first words of the Lord's Prayer: "That God would affectionately invite us to believe, and to be assured, that he is truly our Father, and that we are his chil-

[1] Rom. xii. 1, 2. [2] Acts xvii. 28. [3] Rom. v. 2. [4] Heb. x. 22. [5] Rom. viii. 1.

dren indeed: and to call upon him with all cheerfulness and confidence, even as beloved children entreat a kind and affectionate parent."[1] And St. Paul declares: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."[2] And the beloved Apostle John says: "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."[3]

All *harrowing and distressing anxiety* about ourselves and others as to the supply of our wants—as to "what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or what we shall put on,"[4] has ceased; because we *know* that our heavenly Father will take care of us and provide for us. Even when afflictions come—sickness, pain, sufferings, persecutions, and death—God will overrule all for our good. "For I reckon," says Paul, "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."[5] "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."[6] "And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."[7] "But we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is

[1] Catechism, p. 12. [2] Rom. viii. 15. [3] 1 John i. 3. [4] Matt. vi. 25. [5] Rom. viii. 18. [6] 2 Cor. iv. 17. [7] Rom. viii. 28.

shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."[1] As therefore all things are ordered of God, and he will certainly do all things well, and "the very hairs of our heads are all numbered,"[2] there is no room for undue anxiety and corroding cares, and the man thus united to Christ, and living in him, has a well-spring of constant and unending happiness.

Such persons have attained to what is called FULL ASSURANCE of faith. On this subject I will make some quotations from a work by Thomas C. Upham, entitled "Principles of the Interior or Hidden Life." "The basis of this form of religious experience, as the name given to it itself indicates, is FAITH. And, in this respect, it stands undoubtedly on the same footing with every other form of true religious experience. Nor do I know that the faith, which is experienced in these marked and triumphant instances of the religious life, is different from what is experienced in other cases, except in the single circumstance of DEGREE. It is a very high degree of faith. The term ASSURANCE, which, in its ordinary acceptation, excludes the idea of doubting, is an evidence that it is so. The phrase ASSURANCE OF FAITH conveys, in its own terms and on its own face, the idea of faith without doubting; in other words of perfect faith. Looking at the subject in the light of the terms used, I think we are at liberty to say, that assurance

[1] Rom. v. 3–5. [2] Matt. x. 30.

of faith is synonymous with undoubting or perfect faith. * * Those who are in the enjoyment of this state of mind are a people that have an unwavering confidence in God. In the language of John Rogers, the memorable martyr of Smithfield, given in a short published account of his early religious experience, "they live by faith in the Son of God, above the letter, in the LIFE; above the form, in the POWER; above self, in a higher self; so that they are no longer themselves; but are by the grace of God what they are; not doubting that they shall appear perfect in Christ's righteousness, being pardoned by his death, purged by his blood, sanctified by his Spirit, and saved by his power."[1]

I agree fully with this statement of Upham, that assurance of faith is simply perfect or undoubting faith. But it may be asked what kind of faith that is which *doubts?* Is it faith at all? Doubting certainly is not believing, and it seems to be a contradiction in terms to speak of a doubting faith. Certainly there are *degrees* in faith—there is weak faith and strong faith—but where doubt comes in, and just in so far as it comes in, there faith ceases. When Peter attempted to walk on the water to come to Christ, we are told, that "when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and

[1] Upham's Interior Life, p. 57.

said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt."[1] He had a little faith, weak faith, which he showed by commencing to walk on the water, and crying to the Lord for help; but there was no faith in his *doubting*. Just as far as he doubted, faith ceased altogether. It would seem then to be in the very nature of all real faith, weak and strong, to be *assured* of that which it believes, only the assurance becomes stronger in proportion to the strength of the faith. And so also does the peace and joy increase with the increase of faith. How much reason then have all Christians to pray, "Lord, increase our faith."[2] "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."[3]

It is not true then that it is the privilege of only a few highly favored Christians to attain to the assurance of faith; for *all* may and do obtain this blessing just in as far as they have real faith. But it is undoubtedly true that vast multitudes, not only of infidels and worldlings, but also of professors of religion, have misapprehended the nature of simple and honest faith in Christ altogether, and therefore are *assured* of nothing!—have really no solid ground at all on which to stand. They have believed all sorts of notions and fancies, but not the plain and sure word of God—have built upon almost every imaginable foundation, but not upon the rock, Christ. How different from the character and conduct of such men were the lives and faith of the ancient saints of God,

[1] Mat xiv. 30, 31. [2] Luke xvii. 5. [3] Mark ix. 24.

in regard to whom Mr. Upham has the following: "We have an instructive and precious illustration of the state of mind, denominated ASSURANCE OF FAITH, in the instances of early saints mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews; in Abel, who 'offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;' in Enoch, who 'had this testimony, that he pleased God;' in Abraham, 'who went out, not knowing whither he went,' and who, 'when he was tried, offered up Isaac;' in Moses, 'who esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt;' in Gideon, Barak, David, Samuel, and the prophets; of whom, as well as of others, the testimony is given, that through faith they 'subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, of whom the world was not worthy;' and in regard to whom it is expressly said, that God was 'not ashamed to be called their God.'"[1]

The following extract on this subject, from President Edwards, is valuable and to the point: "It is manifest, that it was a common thing for the saints that we have a history or particular account of in Scripture, to be assured. God, in the plainest and most positive manner, revealed and testified his special favor to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel, and others. Job often speaks of his sincerity and uprightness with the greatest imaginable confidence and assurance, often calling God to witness it; and

[1] Upham's Interior Life, p. 58.

says plainly, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him for myself, and not another."[1] David, throughout the book of Psalms, almost everywhere speaks without hesitancy, and in the most positive manner, of God as his God: glorying in him as his portion and heritage, his rock and confidence, his shield, salvation, and high tower, and the like. Hezekiah appeals to God, as one that knew that he had walked before him in truth, and with a perfect heart.[2] Jesus Christ, in his dying discourse with his disciples, in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John (which was as it were Christ's last will and testament to his disciples, and to his whole Church) often declares his special and everlasting love to them in the plainest and most positive terms; and promises them a future participation with him in his glory, in the most absolute manner; and tells them at the same time that he does so, to the end that their joy might be full. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."[3] See also at the conclusion of his whole discourse: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."[4] Christ was not afraid of speaking too plainly and positively to them; he did not desire to hold them in the least suspense. And he concluded that last dis-

[1] Job xix. 25. [2] 2 Kings xx. 3. [3] John xv. 11. [4] John xvi. 33.

course of his with a prayer in their presence, wherein he speaks positively to his Father of those eleven disciples, as having all of them savingly known him, and believed in him, and received and kept his word; and that they were not of the world; and that for their sakes he sanctified himself; and that his will was that they should be with him in his glory; and tells his Father, that he spoke these things in his prayer, to the end, that his joy might be fulfilled in them.[1] By these things it is evident, that it is agreeable to Christ's designs, and the contrived ordering and disposition Christ makes of things in his Church, that there should be sufficient and abundant provision made, that his saints might have full assurance of their future glory.

The Apostle Paul, through all his epistles, speaks in an assured strain; ever speaking positively of his special relation to Christ, his Lord, and Master, and Redeemer, and his interest in, and expectation of future reward. It would be endless to take notice of all places that might be enumerated: I shall mention but three or four. "Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."[2] "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."[3] "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."[4] "I have fought a good

[1] John xvii. 13. [2] Gal. ii. 20. [3] Phil. i. 21. [4] 2 Tim. i. 12.

fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day."[1]

And the nature of the covenant of grace, and God's declared ends in the appointment and constitution of things in that covenant, do plainly show it to be God's design to make ample provision for the saints having an assured hope of eternal life, while living here upon earth. For so are all things ordered and contrived in that covenant, that every thing might be made sure on God's part. "The covenant is ordered in all things and sure." The promises are most full, and very often repeated, and various ways exhibited; and there are many witnesses, and many seals; and God has confirmed his promises with an oath. And God's declared design in all this is, that the heirs of the promises might have an undoubting hope and full joy, in an assurance of their future glory. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutabilty of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us."[2] But all this would be in vain, to any such purpose, as the saints' strong consolation, and hope of their obtaining future glory, if their interest in those sure

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. [2] Heb. vi. 17, 18.

promises in ordinary cases was not ascertainable. For God's promises and oaths, let them be as sure as they will, cannot give strong hope and comfort to any particular person, any further than he can KNOW that those promises are made to him. And in vain is provision made in Jesus Christ, that believers might be perfect as pertaining to the conscience, as is signified, Heb. ix. 9, if assurance from the guilt of sin is not attainable.

It further appears that assurance is not only attainable in some very extraordinary cases, but that *all* Christians are directed to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, and are told how they may do it.[1] And it is spoken of as a thing very unbecoming Christians, and an argument of something very blamable in them, not to know whether Christ be in them or no: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"[2] And it is implied that it is an argument of a very blamable negligence in Christians, if they practice Christianity after such a manner as to remain uncertain of the reward promised. "I therefore so run, as not uncertainly."[3] And to add no more, it is manifest, that Christians' knowing their interest in the saving benefits of Christianity is a thing ordinarily attainable, because the apostles tell us by what means Christians (and not only apostles and martyrs) were wont to know this. "Now we have received,

[1] 2 Pet. i. 5–8. [2] 2 Cor. xiii. 5. [3] 1 Cor. ix. 26.

not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."[1] "And hereby we do *know* that we know him, if we keep his commandments." * * "Hereby *know* we that we are in him." * * "We *know* that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." * * "Hereby we *know* that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." * * "Hereby we *know* that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."[2] "Therefore it must needs be very unreasonable to determine, that persons are hypocrites, and their affections wrong, because they seem to be out of doubt of their own salvation, and the affections they are the subjects of seem to banish all fears of hell."[3]

The argument seems to us to be perfectly conclusive, and we feel disposed to let the matter rest here. Every true believer *may* be, *must* be, IS FULLY ASSURED of his acceptance with God, and of all that God has promised, just in so far as he has real faith. He rests upon the infallible word and promise of God, which cannot fail. "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."[4] "God is not man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"[5]

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 12. [2] 1 John ii. 3, 5; *et* iii. 14, 19, 24. [3] Works of President Edwards, Vol. iv., pp. 93–96. [4] Matt. v. 18. [5] Num. xxiii. 19.

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say, than to you He has said?
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled.

In every condition—in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth,
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As thy days may demand, so thy succor shall be.

Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismay'd!
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

E'en down to old age, all My people shall prove
My sov'reign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And then, when gray hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.

The soul that on Jesus hath lean'd for repose,
I will not, I cannot desert to His foes:
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never—no, never—no, never forsake.

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